

5 SONGS with Bass Lines

LED ZEPPELIN "Achilles Last Stand" ★ DISTURBED "Inside the Fire" ★ BUCKCHERRY "Sorry"
BLACK SABBATH "Hole in the Sky" ★ STONE TEMPLE PILOTS "Interstate Love Song"

GUITAR WORLD



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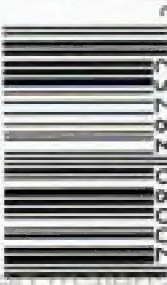
Disturbed's

DAN DONEGAN

fights the good fight



0 8 >



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"Cat Got Your Tone?"

"I Hated My Rig"

"To be honest, I'm hard to please. I'm the one who sends the steak back to the kitchen...several times.

But when it comes to my tone, I'm not just hard to please, I'm impossible!

So not finding the tone I was looking for, I decided to create my own.

Some cats have 9 lives. I've got 9 tones. Maybe I've got yours."

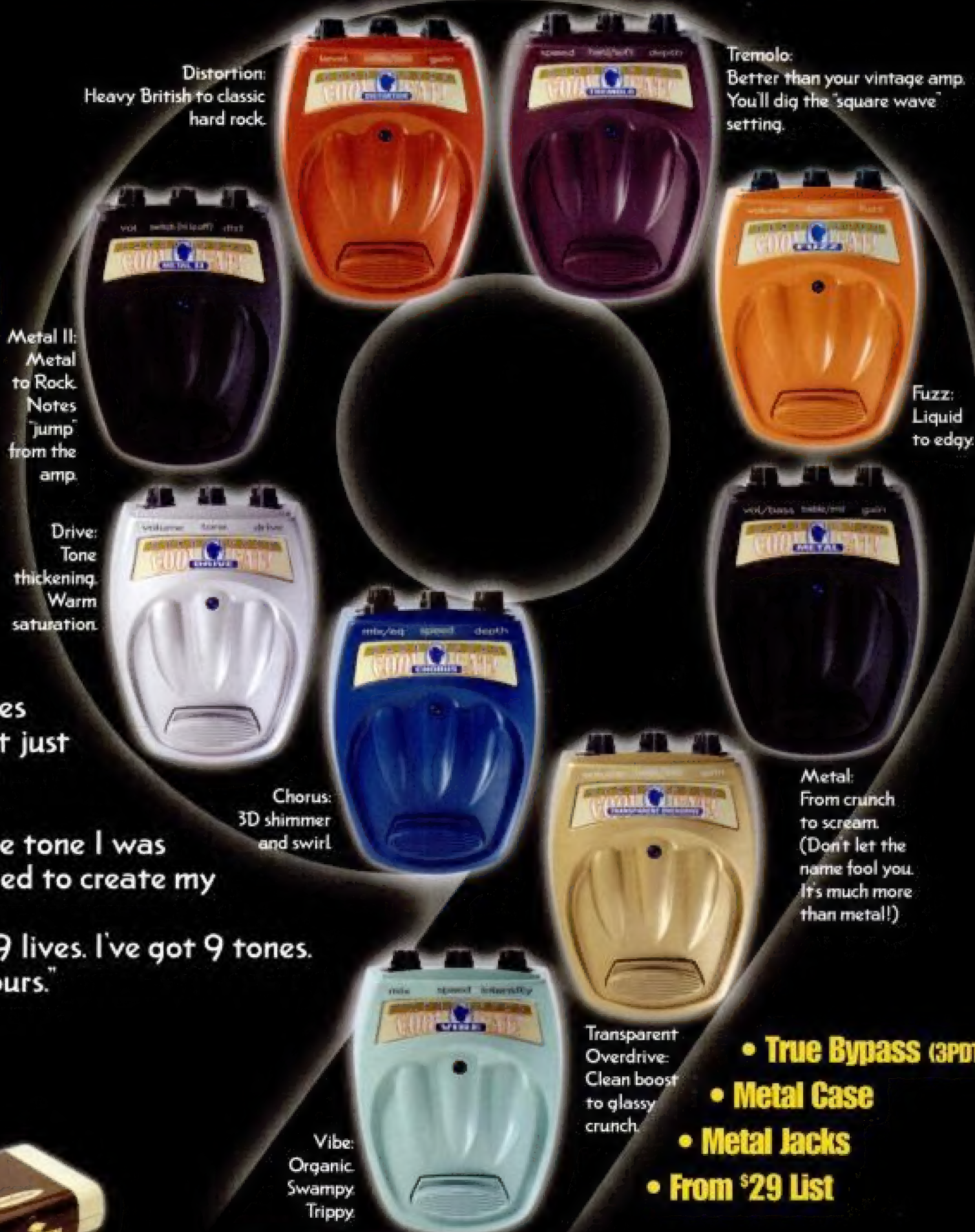
The Cat



Cool Cat Board

Holds 5 "Cats."
Includes DC Supply and all cables.

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- True Bypass (3PDT)
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- Metal Jacks
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This One



9LEL-UZT-N2WR

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Kim Breedlove Private Reserve Series
Mark Series Electric
Master Class Series

What makes

S-Series SC20: "I have loved your guitars ever since I can remember. I toured your factory once, and I still remember it - 'twas a visit to a magical place being a guitar player and woodworker. I am playing more finger style now so I bought an SC20Z from Apple Music in Portland. I now have it at home, and I have picked it up at least four different times today to play it. Simply amazing, although in many ways there is nothing simple about it. The more I play it, the more my amazement of how fine an instrument I have chosen. I am hopelessly spoiled! I am in awe."

– Scott A., Hillsboro, OR

"Susan and I had an absolutely EXCEPTIONAL time last weekend and want to thank everyone at Breedlove for making it so special, exciting and especially educational. I am very excited about collaborating on what should be three very special and unique instruments that highlight what Breedlove is all about. Kim was very helpful in helping me pick out the woods (actually changing my mind from Koa to Myrtlewood) and helping my focus on what should turn out to be a truly unique and very collectable set of instruments."

– Ron M., Santa Barbara, CA

Master Class C15: "All my other guitars are Taylors... I was sold on their tone and playability. Since I've got my Breedlove my Taylors rarely see the outside of their cases. It sounds great and plays great and it is an absolutely beautiful instrument."

– Timothy F., Graceville, FL

"Dear Kim, Jayson, Chris, Colin, Peter, Lysa, Stephanie, and all the other good folks at Breedlove: It has been about nine months since I received my custom Master Class C10 in Redwood and Ziricote with the beveled lower bout (ordered at the Extraordinary Experience). The sound, tonal complexity, physical design, comfort and general appearance all combine to make this instrument truly extraordinary. I marvel at this piece of art every time I play it, which is daily now that I have retired. Now that you have made this instrument, I feel I need to spend my remaining years scrambling to be worthy of it!"

–Duncan P., Dalton, PA

Mark I Chambered Electric: "The first comment I get is 'what's that'. The second is "wow that's beautiful"; then we plug it in..... the tone knob takes it from a crystal clear lead sound to a full on distorted rock machine. Congratulations on creating a piece of art that inspires all of the senses."

- Chris J., Portland, OR



Breedlove Custom Shop
Mark II Custom with Wicked Burst



Breedlove extraordinary?

"In the 35 years that I have been playing guitars, I have owned Martins, Gibsons, Guilds and others such as Lowden, Santa Cruz, and Goodall. On occasion I've had to deal with some of these companies regarding repairs to the instruments. Recently, I purchased my first Breedlove Classic XII and was extremely impressed with this particular guitar. Unfortunately, I had to send it back for repairs, but it turned out to be one of the most accommodating experiences I have ever encountered. Your employees Erika Mohr and Dod Mohr are truly assets to your company. Erika was always pleasant and courteous and made me feel as if I have known her all my life. Dod was willing to take the time and patience to speak to me on a technical basis. I was immediately impressed with his honesty and knowledge (unlike some other companies). The guitar was returned to me and I've never been happier. The quality of workmanship is flawless. The playability, tone and sound are superb. I truly believe that buying a Breedlove guitar was one of the best purchases I have ever made and I can't stop raving about what a great company Breedlove is."

– Fred T., Brooklyn, NY

"This letter is a long time overdue. I just want to thank all of you at Breedlove for producing the best guitars on the planet. You have an excellent customer service team. Dod is awesome. He takes the time and care for every customer he services. I can tell by the way he treated me. He turned a difficult situation into a thing of beauty. My 12-string was in desperate need of repair and he turned it back into a work of art. I can tell by your product the care and love you put into your work, and I thank you."

– Ralph L., Chestnut Ridge, NY

"The Breedlove Extraordinary Experience was truly a once in a lifetime thrill for me. The Breedlove Team did a fabulous job planning this event – and pulling it off as well. Every minute of the trip was memorable for me. Every single person from Breedlove that I met was warm and genuine and did his/her very best to make this trip special. You all should be very proud, not just of the world-class instruments you craft, but of the magical chemistry created by the special individuals who make up the Team."

– John M., NH

Master Class C25: *"This is an outrageous purchase for me, I never thought I would own such a fine instrument. It simply begs to be played, it can be heard quietly humming to itself in imitation of the music it hears. I have never seen it's equal. As testimony to the power of this guitar I submit my Daughter. It is impossible to get her to go to bed or for that matter to get up before 11:00 am but today I found her in the music room playing at 06:00. Thank You for doing what you do."*

– Jon H., Sammamish, WA



King Koa

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What we didn't expect, was that you would change ours.



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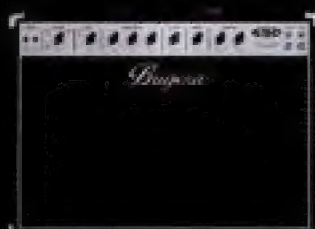
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Model 6260 Amp Head



Model 6260 212 Combo



Model 6262 Amp Head



Model 6262 212 Combo



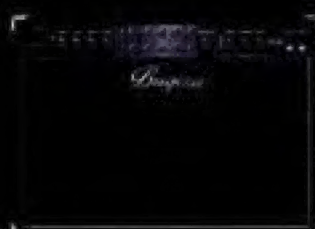
Model 333 Amp Head



Model 333 212 Combo



Model 333XL Amp Head



Model 333XL 212 Combo



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SIGNATURE MODEL

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and his updated PRS
signature model on tour
and on the new Alter
Bridge album *Blackbird*.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: DALE MAY
GROOMING BY KEIR BLAIR FOR MAC COSMETICS

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412 Cobra Cabinet

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You can hear Chris on his solo album "Return to Metalopolis Live" available at www.chrispoland.com and watch for OHM:'s new CD "Circus of Sound" in 2008.

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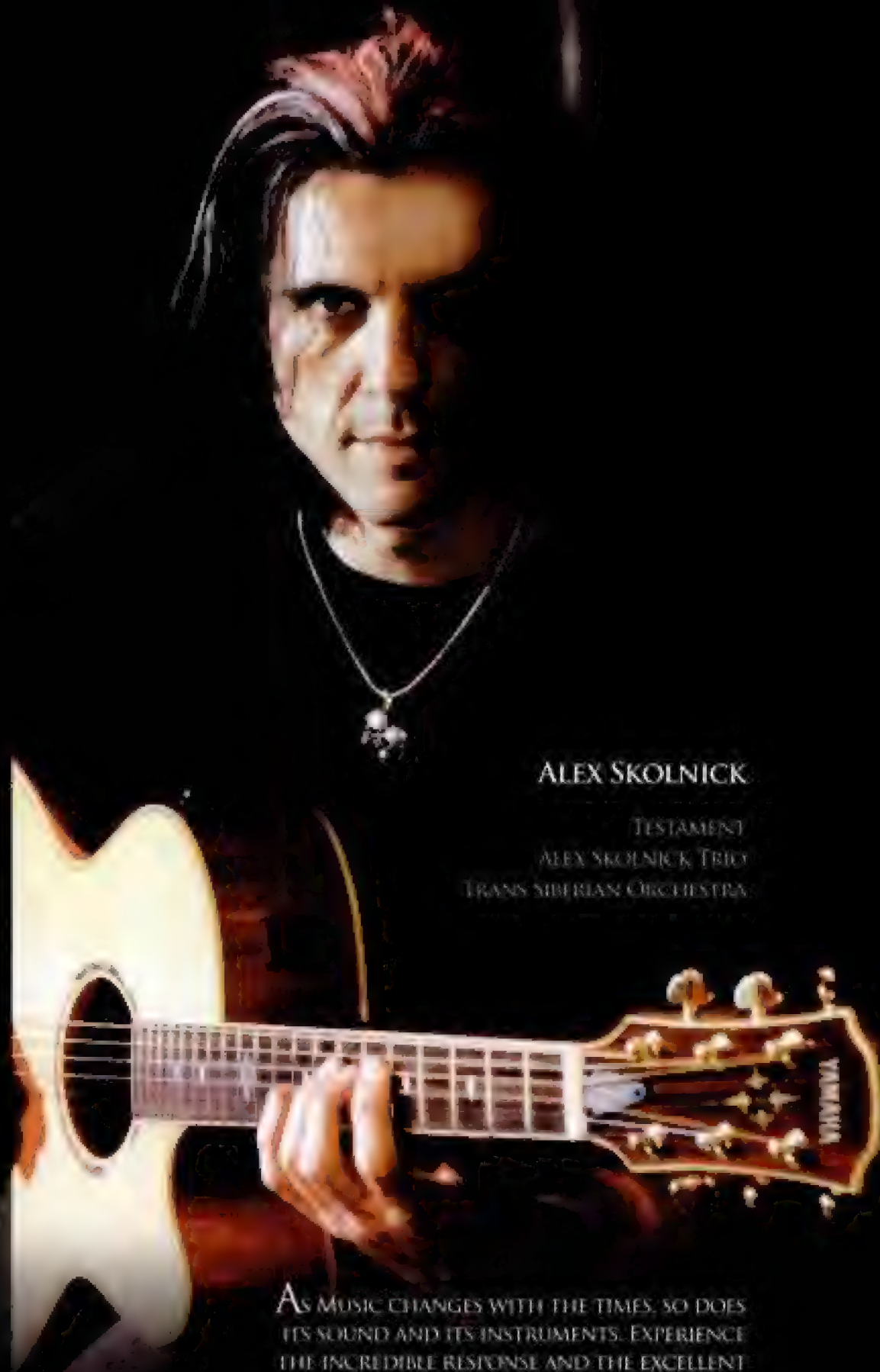
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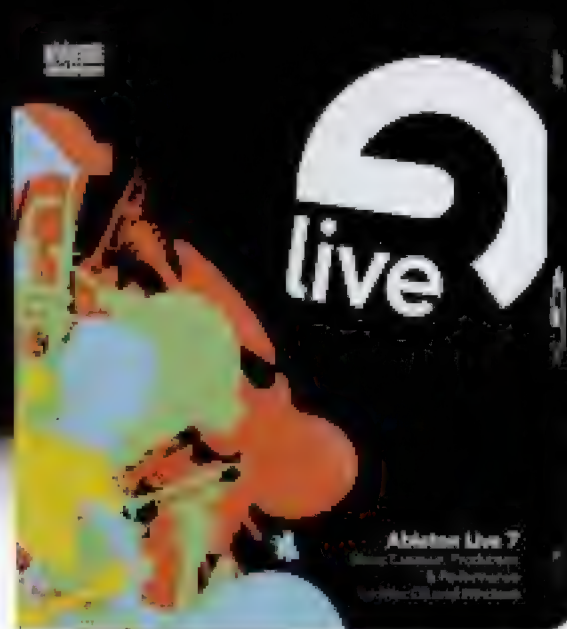
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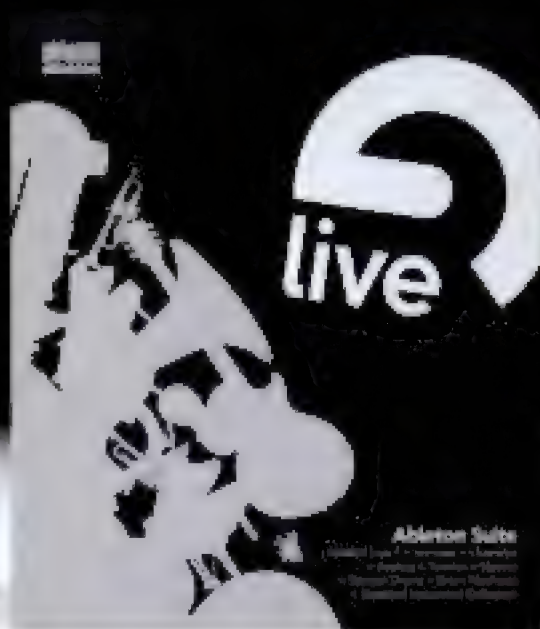
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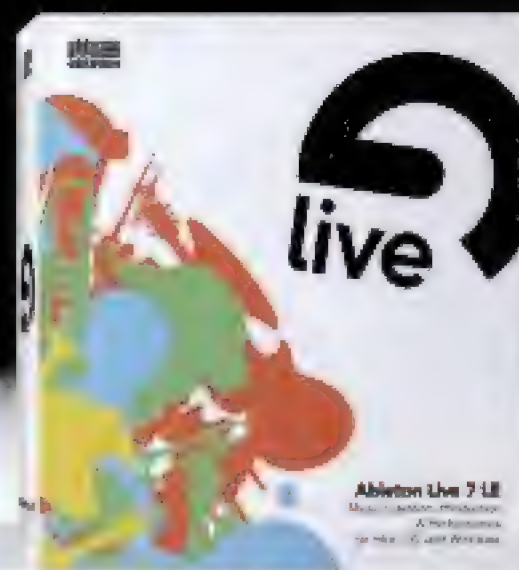
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THE WOODSHED

AUGUST 2008

SUPER TROOPERS

WHAT MAKES A great American guitar hero? Basically the same stuff that makes a "Great American" anything: hard work, ingenuity, a maverick spirit and a little funk and grit. This month, we get out the cannons and salute some of the elite who have plugged in and rocked out in a way that makes us proud to be citizens of this here United States.

Don Donegan, this issue's cover artist, is a former construction worker who never forgot his blue-collar origins. As such, he is the epitome of a hardworking musician—getting out of bed every day, rolling up his sleeves and working his fingers to the bone in order to make his band a success. Recently, Donegan and his band, Disturbed, took time out from making their latest album, *Indestructible*, to give something back to U.S. soldiers. Putting their own safety at risk, they traveled to Afghanistan to play for the troops. Does that make Dan and his group special? Dan would



say he's just doing his duty.

When it comes to old-fashioned American ingenuity and maverick spirit, it would be hard to find better examples than super-shredder Randy Rhoads and avant-garde provocateur Frank Zappa. Follow us as we travel to the former haunts of these two late guitar icons and honor their rich legacy through the guitars, amps and pedals they used to create their unforgettable music. A special thanks goes out to the Rhoads family and to Frank's

son Dweezil for welcoming *Guitar World* into their homes and offering their time, hospitality and rich memories.

Finally, we add a bit of the grit and the funk that are so important to our nation's cultural heritage. When it comes to music, ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd have more than a little to pass around. Both of these fine, upstanding, 'merican bands have albums that in 2008 celebrate serious anniversaries, and we're here to provide the fireworks and the parade.

By the way, extra points go to those readers who recognized that we painstakingly recreated the jacket artwork from Iron Maiden's "The Trooper" single on this month's cover, with two important differences: Dan Donegan takes the place of Maiden's skeletal mascot, Eddie, and we replaced the British flag with our very own Star-Spangled Banner...just in time for the Fourth of July!

—BRAD TOLINSKI
Editor-in-Chief

JUSTIN BORUCKI (TOLINSKI); DALE MAY (DONEGAN)

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HERO WORSHIP

Kudos for your attitude and article on *Guitar Hero* [June 2008]. I was skeptical about this game when it came out, but if it makes one kid strap on a virtual guitar instead of a virtual gun, it rocks in my book.

—Rick

In 2005 you guys did an interview with Alexi Laiho from Children of Bodom. That interview helped me end my battle with depression and turn my life around, using my negative feelings toward the completion of something good. I became a teacher and completed my Masters. I also gained interest in music again and I became a huge Children of Bodom fan. Now I see Alexi again in the June issue, and I have no words to express how thankful I am for him sharing his feelings and giving readers like me advice.

—Sophie Garcia

I usually don't get inspired enough to write you guys, but I was thoroughly satisfied with the June issue. I loved the lesson with John Petrucci, as well as Andy Aledort's article on guitar heroics. And the interview with my own guitar hero, Alexi Laiho, was especially cool. The icing on the cake was the transcriptions of "Lake Bodom" and "Thunderhorse." Thanks for an overall kick-ass issue!

—Alan Forster

TROWER POWER

Having Paul Gilbert interview Robin Trower was a stroke of genius. A talent like Trower comes along once in a lifetime, and Paul has given so much to the guitar community with his incredible playing, humility and great sense of humor. What's next, George Lynch interviews Frank Marino?

—Fate Hopkins

AND THE WINNER IS...

I recently won the Leslie West Dean guitar contest you had on guitarworld.com, and I just wanted to thank you all for the prize. This guitar is one sweet piece of art in motion. It sounds incredible, and the range on this thing is crazy. It's truly beautiful. Thanks again.

—Bryan Berryhill



OUT OF FASHION

I am a longtime subscriber and love your mag, but I can't help being a little disgusted by your choice to publish fashion advice ["Dressed to Kill"] in your June 2008 issue. While I applaud your advice to not blow the wad at Hot Topic, rock and roll is art, and art is free expression. To imply that to express myself properly through the rock medium I must dress a certain way is ridiculous. What if Jimi Hendrix had conformed to the fashion trends of his era?

—Peter M. Grossman

While I enjoyed the John Petrucci lesson and interview with Alexi Laiho, I was disappointed in the "Dressed to Kill" article. Being a great guitarist has nothing to do with what you wear or look like. If anything, being a guitar hero is about being original and playing great music with some talent. I thought if anyone would understand that, it would be you guys.

—Jim

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

It seems as if more than 50 percent of players featured in *Vulgar Display of Power* list their "secret weapon" as booze. Way to let young players know how it is done, *Guitar World*! I look forward to the *Buyer's Guide* on rehab clinics.

—Kenny J. Stevens

We looked at the past 21 issues and counted exactly two guitarists who fit your description—less than 10 percent. What are you drinking, Kenny?

TAKE COVER

I'm a thirtysomething weekend warrior lead singer/guitarist and lifelong enthusiast of your magazine, so naturally I had to take a shot at making my own *Guitar World* cover (since you challenged us PhotoShoppers a few issues back). I know that Slash and Velvet Revolver have millions of great singers to choose from to replace Scott Weiland, but a fella can dream, can't he?

—Brent Welk
Lancaster, PA



To see more *Guitar World* reader covers, go to guitarworld.com and see our special gallery. And if you think you can do better, submit your own cover to news@guitarworld.com! If you would like a proper *Guitar World* logo to work with, you can find it at guitarworld.com/logo.

“**ROCK AND ROLL IS ART, AND ART IS FREE EXPRESSION.**”

RECENT READER TRANSCRIPTION REQUESTS

TRANSCRIBED!
On page 118 of this issue

- JIMI HENDRIX "Rave In the Garden"
- ALTER BRIDGE "Blindfold"
- LED ZEPPELIN "Achilles Last Stand"
- RADIOHEAD "Karma Chameleon"
- EXODUS "Tribal War"

Go to guitarworld.com to see the complete list of requests and to submit your own.

CORRECTION

The *Guitar Legends* Randy Rhoads issue should have credited Ron Sobol for the photographs on pages 16, 21, 26, 38 and 39 and John Livzey for the photograph on page 34. Our sincere apologies to Sobol and Livzey and to Neil Zlosower, who was credited for some of those images.

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH

GUITAR WORLD READERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



OLIVIER GALAN

AGE 46
HOMETOWN Barcelona, Spain
GUITARS '86 Jackson Soloist, '62 Fender Stratocaster, Schecter C7 Hellraiser
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING AC/DC's "Girls Got Rhythm," Rose Tattoo's "Rock N Roll Outlaw" and originals by my band, Big Time.
GEAR I MOST WANT A second-hand lefty PRS



TONY VEGA

AGE 27
HOMETOWN Portsmouth, OH
GUITARS Agile AL-3100, Agile AL-3000, Gibson Les Paul Junior
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING "Mississippi Queen" by Mountain, "The Wicker Man" by Iron Maiden
GEAR I MOST WANT Gibson Marauder, or just an LP with a Flying V headstock



CARL ROWE

AGE 11
HOMETOWN Tecumseh, OK
GUITAR Silverstone SS10
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING "Afterlife" by Avenged Sevenfold and "Master of Puppets" by Metallica
GEAR I MOST WANT Carvin DC727C seven-string

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TUNE-UPS

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MARCH OF DIME

DAVID ELLEFSON, RIPPER OWENS AND OTHERS HONOR DIMEBAG DARRELL IN SONG AND RAISE MONEY FOR KIDS.

I T'S BEEN MONTHS since we first heard news that a memorial CD was being recorded in honor of the late Dimebag Darrell. Now, at long last, the first track has surfaced.

Titled "Leave It Alone," the song was written by Dime's longtime pal Tristan "1690" Grigsby, guitarist with Diatribe, and features performances by former Megadeth bassist David Ellefson, Shadows Fall drummer Jason Bittner and current Yngwie Malmsteen vocalist Tim "Ripper" Owens. The track also puts the spotlight on guest soloists that include *Guitar World's* own Nick Bowcott, who worked closely with Dime on his celebrated "Riffer Madness" column and countless other *Guitar World* pieces.

"The guys did an amazing job on the track," Bowcott says. "Ripper's incredible vocal performance just takes it to a whole new level." For his solo, Bowcott endeavored to make a contribution that Dime would be proud of. "In tribute to him, I tried to tip my hat not only to his inimitable style but also to those of his major influences: Ace

Frehley, Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads."

"Leave It Alone" can be downloaded at myspace.com/dimetrack as well as at iTunes. All proceeds will benefit Little Kids Rock, a charity that puts guitars in the hands of deserving kids and teaches them to play.

Explains Grigsby, "We want to make

sure the next great guitarist doesn't miss an opportunity because he or she wasn't introduced to music. Darrell was into doing something positive that could help kids in any way at all. Plus it's great for the health of your own soul. So we're paying it forward, just like Dime did." □

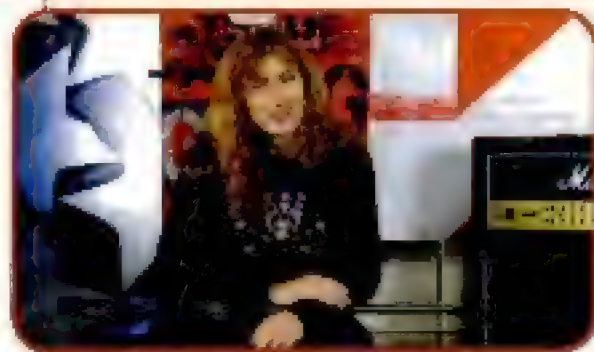
“Darrell was into doing something positive that could help kids in any way at all.”

—Tristan Grigsby



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* ROAD RASHI

For the past few years, nearly every artist to come through the *Guitar World* office doors has been asked to tell us—as the cameras roll—a great road story. Now, in a special feature on *GuitarWorld.com*, you can watch the videotaped responses from such guitarists as Dave Mustaine, Alex Skolnick, Down's Pepper Keenan, Killswitch Engage's Adam Dutkiewicz, Joe Satriani, Tom DeLonge, Nuno Bettencourt, Leslie West, Paul Gilbert and many others! What metal guitar icon was in a taxi that ran over and killed a homeless person? What A-list shredder

got a power drill stuck in his hair? What alt-rock hero learned a valuable life lesson from the Clash's Joe Strummer? Check out our Road Rash feature and find out!

* GUITAR WORLD TABS SITE RELAUNCH!

Guitar World's official guitar tabs site, tabs.guitarworld.com, has been officially relaunched, with a fresh paint job, new tabs and increased functionality. Among the new content you'll find user-generated tabs of songs by Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, Pantera, Radiohead and more, as well as official *Guitar World* Premium tabs of songs by Children of Bodom!

* THE NEW GUITAR WORLD STORE!

Guitar World now has an official online store located

at guitarworld.com/store, where you can purchase past and current installments in our instructional DVD series, including *Beginning Rock Guitar*, *Blues & Blues Rock* and *How to Play the Jimi Hendrix Experience's Axis: Bold As Love*. Watch for new products to be added regularly.

* EXCLUSIVE LIVE TESTAMENT VIDEO!

Guitar World's extreme metal site, *MetalKult.com*, was on hand to film a Testament concert in New York City recently. The crew captured the legendary thrash band as it tore through the classic cuts "Over the Wall," "Into the



Pit," "Apocalyptic City" and "Practice What You Preach." And be sure to check out MetalKult's other video offerings, including an interview with Alexi Laiho from Children of Bodom, a classic riff lesson with Exodus' Gary Holt and an interview with Opeth.

* NEW GUITARWORLD.COM BLOGS!

GuitarWorld.com has added a Blogs section to the site. In The Fine Print, we give you all the dirt on what goes on in and around the *Guitar World* offices. See which superstar shredders come by for lessons

and interviews, read about concerts we attend, view the contents of our daily mail deliveries—and see photos of the *Guitar World* Office Guitar, signed by Slash, Dave Mustaine, Steve Howe and many more! In our *Axology* blog, you can read all about new products from the guitar community, including Dean's Trivium Signature Model guitars, Blackheart's new BH100H Hothead 100-watt amp, new Boss pedals and much more. Plus, check out the special guest Artist Blogs by Protest the Hero and Idiot Pilot!

CURRENT ONLINE FEATURES

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- YNGWIE MALMSTEEN Home Studio Tour
- BLACK TIDE Video Interview

BETCHA CAN'T PLAY THIS!
JIMMY BROWN


"HERE'S ANOTHER rollercoaster-like 'jazz-metal' line played over the same harmonically spiced-up diatonic chord progression in C as last month's lick, with a similarly bright distorted tone, some legato phrasing, a light pick-hand touch and attentive palm muting of idle strings. My goal again was to craft an interestingly contoured, harmonically self-describing 'stand-alone' melody that strongly outlines the chord progression and 'paints' the harmony with rich color tones.

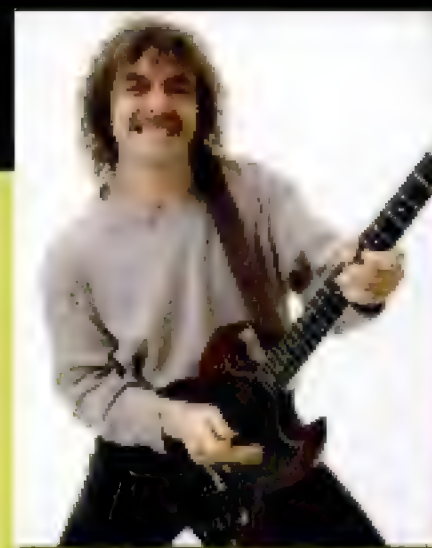
"Using arpeggios as the framework, I target non-root chord tones on the downbeat of each bar to create good, harmonious counterpoint with the root note of each successive chord, which is implied by the line's shape and context and which may also be played by a bassist. I then use scalar and chromatic passing tones to fill out and sculpt the line.

"Notice on beat three of bar 1 how, over Dm7, I melodically employ a stock voice leading move often applied to a minor chord in jazz and traditional pop harmony, which is to voice the chord in root position and chromatically descend from the root to the major seventh, minor seventh and sixth (in this case D, C#, C, B).

Well-known examples of this same 'minor drop' move are the opening bars of Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway to Heaven' and 'Michelle' by the Beatles.

"Over G7 in bars 2 and 6 I add a momentary splash of tension to the harmony by touching upon both the sharp and flat ninths, A#, and A-, respectively, using the G altered-

dominant scale (G A- B- B D- E- F), which is the seventh mode of A- melodic minor (A- B- C- D- E- F G). I take a similar approach over A7 in bar 4, using the A altered-dominant scale (A B- C# E- F G), which is the same as B- melodic minor (B- C D- E- F G A), to melodically paint a poignant descending A7#9#5 arpeggio." □



(key of C)

Fast

Chords: Dm7, G7#9, Em7#5, A7#9#5, Dm7, G7#9, Cmaj7, Csus2#11

Tablature (TAB) and Fingering (F) are provided for each measure.

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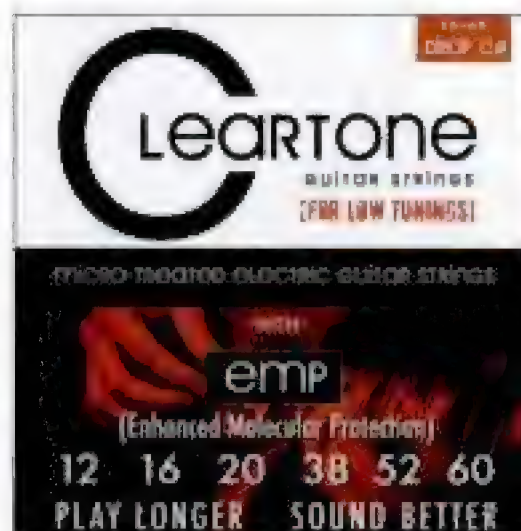


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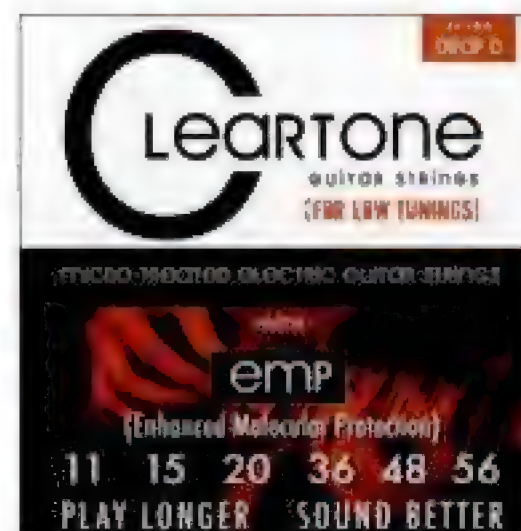
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» GUITAR LEGENDS: IRON MAIDEN

Guitar World pays tribute to the legends of metal with this special edition of *Guitar Legends* magazine. In it you'll find classic interviews with Maiden band members both past and present, a new interview with guitarists Adrian Smith and Dave Murray, a revealing profile of Eddie creator and Iron Maiden artist Derek Riggs, never-before-seen classic photos from Ross Halfin and transcriptions to five Maiden classics, with bass lines: "Run to the Hills," "Phantom of the Opera," "The Trooper," "The Prisoner" and "Wasted Years."

» ACOUSTIC ROCK SPECIAL

Readers of the former publication *Guitar World Acoustic* will want to check out our *Acoustic*



others. Plus, you'll get a complete guide to amplifying your acoustic guitar, interviews with Paul McCartney, Tom Petty and John Mayer, and transcriptions (with easy-to-play chord charts) of Nickelback's "Photograph," the Beatles' "Across the Universe," Daughtry's "Home," Tom Petty "Free Fallin'" and the Black Crowes' "She Talks to Angels."

» ACOUSTIC ROCK GUITAR DVD

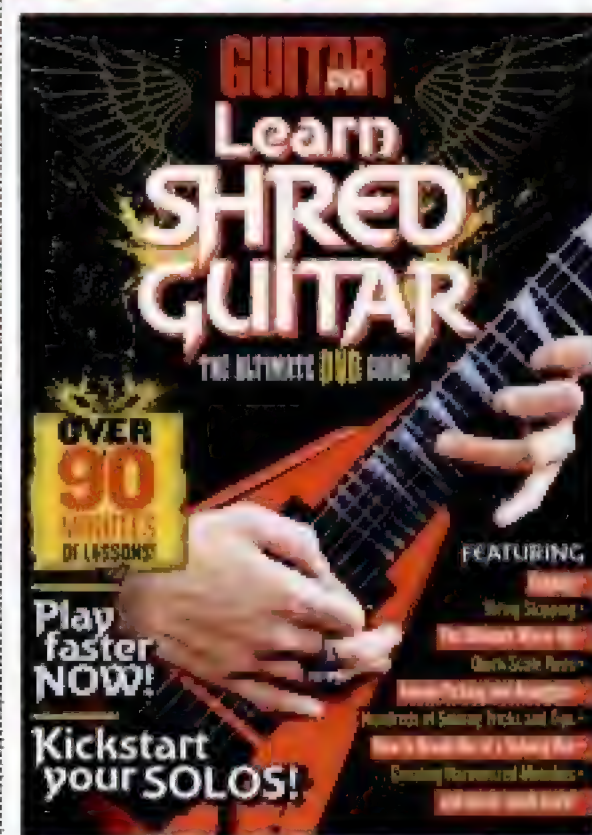


Guitar World's instructional DVD series continues with *How to Play Acoustic Rock Guitar*, featuring more than two hours of lessons and a full-size booklet of sheet music. With Andy Aledort as your host, *How to Play Acoustic Rock Guitar* teaches you basic strum-

ming patterns, how to use a capo, finger-picking techniques, alternate tunings, arpeggiated patterns, acoustic soloing and much more. Plus, learn the acoustic rock secrets of Led Zeppelin, Neil Young, Dave Matthews, the Beatles, John Mayer and Nirvana!

» LEARN SHRED GUITAR DVD

Kick your shred playing up a few notches with this special DVD! Over the course of 90 minutes of lessons, guitar virtuoso (and *Guitar World* columnist) Michael Angelo Batio teaches you about tapping, string skipping, warm-up exercises, quick scale runs, sweep picking, creating harmonized melodies and more. Included in the package is a full-size book of tablature to help you work through and practice the examples on the disc.



INQUIRER [By RANDY HARWARD]

MORGAN STEINMEYER HÅKANSSON OF MARDUK

What inspired you to first pick up a guitar?

I don't know. I guess it was whatever makes you want to play guitar when you're really young. I had some friends whose older brothers played guitar, so that probably influenced me.

What was your first guitar?

It was made by a guitar company called Dake. I played it through a DMS amplifier that I bought myself. The guitar was really nothing at all, but I plugged it into an overdrive pedal and drove my mom insane.

What was the first song you learned?

"Smoke on the Water." Nobody really taught me anything, in the beginning, I played by myself and started writing music because I didn't know any songs. But then I learned some riffs by Deep Purple and Rainbow, and that helped me learn

Do you recall your first gig?

Not really, but it was probably at a youth center. Me and my

friends were in a lot of bands, and we'd play out on Fridays. So it could have been anywhere.

Ever had a nightmare gig?

Yeah, basically any time we play a festival. You go in and get immediately pushed onto a big stage, and you aren't even given time to get lunch or do anything. Nothing is working the way it's supposed to because you didn't get a soundcheck, but that's how it goes. You just cope with it.

What is your favorite piece of gear?

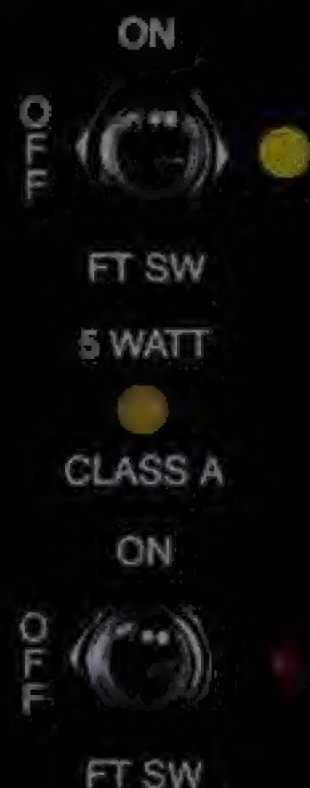
My favorite piece of gear is my ESP guitar and my Marshall JCM800 that I've been using since 1992. I also use a Metal Zone distortion pedal and a Gibson Flying V that I bought, like, two months ago.

Do you have any advice for young players?

Focus on what you're doing when you play. Stay strong and stay determined. ☐



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[Interview and photos by NICK BOWCOTT]



9-26-07 (90 MIN)

SLEEPWALKER
TAKE NO PRISONERS
WAKE UP DEAD
SKIN O' MY TEETH
GEARS OF WAR
SHE WOLF
DARKEST HOUR
HANGAR 18
WASHINGTON IS NEXT
KICK THE CHAIR
A TOUT LE MONDE
TORNADO
RECKONING DAY
PEACE SELLS
NEVER WALK ALONE
SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION
HOLY WARS

New York City, NY

1. "SLEEPWALKER" "It starts with a [recorded] intro, which makes a good way for us to come onstage. Plus, the arrangement makes it easy for our soundman to fine-tune the mix. I start off by myself, followed by each of the other guys, so the soundman can adjust each track as they come in. It has backing vocals, too, so by the end of the song, he can have the entire stage cued. It's a good opener that I look forward to playing every night."

2. "TAKE NO PRISONERS" "This is a great song to pick up the tempo a little bit, plus it's not one of our songs the audience expects us to play. But it's very syncopated and has a lot of polyrhythms, which makes it exciting to perform, especially for me, since I have to sing it."

3. "SKIN O' MY TEETH" "This is a pretty straightforward rock and roll/metal song from *Countdown to Extinction*. By the time we're done with it, we've played four songs from different Megadeth eras, and that pretty much ties everything together."

4. "GEARS OF WAR" "This was written for a video game, and it's got a really simple, heavy riff underneath it. The audience really enjoys this song because of its tempo."

5. "SHE WOLF" "I wrote this one about an old friend's wife. This is another long song that's predominantly riff-orientated, except for the choruses. Plus it's got a really good guitar duel at the end."

6. "IN MY DARKEST HOUR" "A lot of people have found solace in this song somehow. I never expected it to be such a healing song. I wrote it the day that [Metallica bassist] Cliff Burton died, and it's become a fan favorite over the years."

7. "HANGAR 18" "That's a song I'd written back in the Seventies before I was even in Metallica. It used to be called 'NaRHQ' after the numbers on the side of a plane. I was just a kid when I wrote it."

8. "WASHINGTON IS NEXT!" "This is about two different topics—it's about a story from the Bible, and it's also a story about world history. It has a great guitar part in the middle when the leads switch back and forth."

9. "KICK THE CHAIR" "I wrote this riff in Korea. Everything was going pretty wrong with the band at the time, and I was really angry. The fast stuff under the singing is one of my favorite rhythm parts."

10. "A TOUT LE MONDE" "This one is from *Youthanasia*. I always crack up when I sing it, because I remember the French guy we imported to help me with my pronunciation. After I sang it I asked him, 'Was that good?' and he said, 'That was really grand!'"

11. "TORNADO OF SOULS" "I wrote this after I broke up with my fiancée. We were just so toxic together that I knew we couldn't hang. When this song starts up most of the fans lose their minds because it's one of those really

extraordinary guitar solo songs that Marty [Friedman] did."

12. "RECKONING DAY" "This one was written after I'd watched the movie *Tombstone*. I really liked Val Kilmer's performance as Doc Holliday, particularly one of his lines when he's caught in a cross fire. Someone says, 'Wyatt Earp's here's to get his revenge,' and Kilmer replies, 'It's not revenge he's after—it's a reckoning.'"

13. "PEACE SELLS" "It's one of our anthems that's been there since the beginning. It was one of our first radio 'hits,' so to speak. MTV picked it up as the theme song for *MTV News* and used it for years, but they cut it right before they'd have to pay me anything for it. I got a lot of popularity from it but not a penny from them."

14. "SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION" "This was the first real big Megadeth hit. I remember writing the lyrics to it on the back of a receipt while riding down a side street by my house in L.A., right after I first got married. I still have that receipt."

15. "HOLY WARS" "This is our set closer and has some classic guitar riffs in it that I really enjoy playing. I wrote it about the [Catholic-Protestant] conflict in Northern Ireland the day after we performed there. We had to be taken out of town in a bulletproof bus."

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MY MORNING JACKET

LOUISVILLE SLUGGERS [By RICHARD BIENSTOCK Photo by JOHN LANGFORD]



everything up from the drums and the beats, rather than starting with the guitars and riffs."

There are, of course, still plenty of guitars and riffs on the album. Though as players they come from different backgrounds—James grew up on Jimmy Page and Dinosaur Jr.'s J Mascis, whereas Broemel studied classical guitar at Indiana University—the two hardly have defined roles in the band. "Sometimes Jim will write a solo but I'll wind up playing it on the album. Or he'll record it but I'll do it onstage," Broemel says. "I don't think there's too much ownership over specific aspects of our sound. Except that I'm always in the left speaker!"

When it comes to guitars, however, each musician has his particulars. James sticks to Gibson Flying Vs and ES-335s, while Broemel is an avowed Les Paul man. "I have a hierarchy with them," he explains. "I start with the black Les Paul, and if that doesn't sound right I go to the Gold Top. If

that doesn't work I go to the sunburst." He pauses. "And if that doesn't work I just start freaking out." ☐

AXOLOGY

• **GUITARS** (JAMES) Gibson Flying V, ES-335, J-185 and Southern Jumbo acoustics; (BROEMEL) Gibson Les Paul, Fender Telecaster

• **AMPS** (BOTH) Mesa/Boogie Trem-O-Verb; Fender Pro Junior; assorted Carr, Vox, Premier and Top Hat amps

• **EFFECTS** (BOTH) Ibanez Tube Screamer, Durham Sex Drive, Boss BD-2 Blues Driver, Boss RV-5 Digital Reverb, SIB Mr. Echo

"IT'S OKAY TO ROCK," says My Morning Jacket's Jim James. The singer and guitarist knows of what he speaks. Over the course of 10 years and four studio albums, his band has progressed from a beloved, underground indie act to a widely lauded, arena-sized riff-wielding juggernaut. Consider the song "Remnants," from My Morning Jacket's new and fifth release, *Evil Urges* (ATO), on which James unleashes a huge, distortion-soaked guitar line on top of his band mates' staccato rhythm stabs. Or "Aluminum Park," where co-guitarist Carl Broemel rips a squealing, strangled lead that would make Neil Young proud. "It's like we're the indie guy's guilty pleasure," Broemel says, with a laugh.

Formed in 1998 in Louisville, Kentucky, My Morning Jacket broke through with their third record, 2003's *It Still Moves*, on which they colored their rootsy, southern-gothic sound with noodly instrumental excursions, spacey keyboards, eerie atmospherics and James' howling, reverb-drenched vocals. They also turned up the amps, letting loose with fuzzed-out guitar riffs and screaming solos, a stylistic shift that they developed further on 2005's *Z* and continue to mine on the new album.

But *Evil Urges* finds the five-piece exploring new musical territory, as well. "I think this record is tighter and more propulsive than past ones," James says. "We were going for something with almost an R&B vibe. We built

INTRODUCING



SKELETONWITCH

ALBUM *Beyond the Permafrost* (Prosthetic)

THE SOUND

NWOBHM-influenced death metal

HISTORY

Formed under the wide-open skies of Athens, Ohio, Skeletonwitch have been delivering metal to the underground masses since 2003. Led by the growls of singer Chance Garnette and dual-guitar attack of brother Nate Garnette and Scott Hendrick, they launch their diverse, thrashing assault on a larger audience with *Beyond the Permafrost*, the quintet's Prosthetic Records debut.

TALKBOX "Our goal is always to write music that we love," Hendrick explains. "We're not consciously setting out to incorporate different metal styles into our music; we're just huge fans of death, black and thrash, and that comes across naturally."



INFERNOPHONIC

ALBUM *Spark It Up*

THE SOUND Hard rock with stoner-riff roots

HISTORY

Infernophonic came together when former Non-Fiction bassist Kevin Bolembach recruited axman Pat Piegari, drummer Ross Kantor and red-hot singer Elaine Tuttle. On its debut, *Spark It Up*, this Clifton, New Jersey, four-piece explores rich melodic and lyrical topics on such tracks as "Eye of the Jedi," "Invisible Slaves" and "Middle of the Road."

TALKBOX Says Bolembach, "Infernophonic melts and melds a diverse audio arsenal to create a sonic experience that is indefinable, undeniable and unforgettable."

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SUICIDE SILENCE

A CLEAN KILL [By JON WIEDERBORN]



(left) Garza and Heylmun

AS ONE OF THE most extreme acts on the 2008 Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival, deathcore act Suicide Silence know they'll be facing some major adversity when they step onstage. In fact, they're looking forward to it.

"I actually prefer playing for a crowd that doesn't know us, or even hates us," says guitarist Chris Garza, who formed the band in Riverside, California, in 2000. "It makes me play harder, because I'm just like, Fuck it, I'm gonna have some fun and knock some kids on their asses."

This balls-out approach worked wonders on skeptical Nile and Behemoth fans during past runs and has been a major factor in Suicide Silence's success. Onstage, their passion and determination shine through the torrential compositions, and nonstop tours have helped drive the group's 2007 album, *The Cleansing*, to nearly 40,000 in sales (the most of any debut in the history of their label, Century Media). Scathing and unrelenting, the disc is fueled by roaring, visceral seven-string guitar riffs, squalling harmonics and chugging breakdowns. But unlike a lot of extreme metal, the compositions are simple and easy to follow.

"When I was working on these songs, I wasn't trying to write myself into a corner where, when I got onstage, I couldn't play what I did in the studio," says second guitarist Mark Heylmun, who has been with SS since 2005. "I was just trying to write stuff I could have fun playing live."

Of course, just because *The Cleansing* is relatively easy to listen to doesn't mean it was a breeze to create. "We were in my den for eight hours a day, on and off for two months, working on this stuff," Garza says. "It was million-degree weather, and we were sweating our asses off the whole time, but we were so fucking stoked when it was done." □

AXOLOGY

- **GUITAR** (BOTH) ESP SC607 seven-string
- **AMPS** (GARZA) Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier; (HEYLMUN) Carvin V3
- **EFFECTS** EFFECTS (GARZA) Maxon Tube Screamer; (HEYLMUN) BBE Sonic Maximizer
- **STRINGS** (BOTH) Dean Markley

THE PARLOR MOB

BIRDS OF A FEATHER [By KORY GROW Photo by JUSTIN BORUCKI]



(left) Rosen and Ritchie

STANDING OUT IN a crowd has never been a problem for gritty hard rockers the Parlor Mob. Based on the north shore of New Jersey, home to uncountable emo bands, the quintet played prog-rock, which forced it take any supporting gig it could get, no matter what kind of music the headliner played.

"It got kind of depressing because it just didn't feel like anything new was happening," guitarist Paul Ritchie says. "I don't think any of the other bands that we played with dug us at all. But people at the shows did."

Now pushing a straightforward rock sound, the Parlor Mob have become headliners just four years after forming. Their debut, *And You Were a Crow* (Roadrunner), shows off the bluesy, classic-rock-influenced riffs they worked so hard to hone, most notably on the anthemic "Hard Times," which they wrote in a day. Changing genres had helped Ritchie and co-guitarist Dave Rosen develop their songwriting chops to complement the technical playing they needed when they were prog rockers.

"Having played with lots of loose rock bands now, we pride ourselves on our tight playing," Rosen says. "Now, though, we're sloppy from time to time—with due reason. We loosen up a little when the music calls for it." Adds Ritchie, "When we simplify and start with the groove, it's real easy for everybody to

lock in where we all used to play really fast."

Their most rewarding lesson from writing *Crow*, however, was how each guitarist started to use his strengths to benefit the other's weaknesses. Rather than wheeling out endless single-note prog riffs, one focused on rhythm guitars as the other built traditional solos, which itself was new to the guitarists. "We're learning a lot every time we play," Rosen says. "Sometimes it's terrible and sometimes it's great. But we constantly try to do things we weren't capable of doing before and just 'up' ourselves." □

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** (RITCHIE) Fender Classic Series '72 Telecaster Deluxe; (ROSEN) Fender Stratocaster
- **AMP** (RITCHIE) Orange 8030, Orange 2x12 Cabinet; (ROSEN) Matamp 2x12 combo
- **EFFECTS** (RITCHIE) Boss TU-2 Tuner, Electro-Harmonix Octave Multiplier, MXR M-133 Micro Amp, Boss DD-3 Digital Delay; (ROSEN) Boss TU-2 Tuner, Electro-Harmonix Little Big Muff, Electro-Harmonix Octave Multiplier, Electro-Harmonix POG Polyphonic Octave Generator, Foxrox Octron
- **STRINGS** (BOTH) Ernie Ball

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NEAL SCHON OF JOURNEY

AT 15, HE TURNED DOWN ERIC CLAPTON TO PLAY WITH CARLOS SANTANA, THEN MADE IT EVEN BIGGER WITH HIS GROUP JOURNEY. BUT WHAT GUITAR WORLD READERS REALLY WANT TO KNOW IS...

I read that Journey is coming out with a new record, is that true?

—Gary Meeker

Actually, it's a CD and live DVD package. We just filmed the DVD in Las Vegas, and Kevin Shirley [who worked on Led Zeppelin DVD] is mixing it in 5.1 surround sound. It's called *Revelation* and should be out soon.

How do you feel that "Don't Stop Believing" was used in the series finale of *The Sopranos*? And is it true you're releasing a re-recorded version of the song?

—Toby Dean Walcott

I didn't know it was in the final episode until after it aired. I'm not on the computer every day, and the guy that works our publishing sends us emails, and I guess I just missed it. But I certainly found out when my phone started ringing off the hook! [laughs] When I finally watched the episode, I thought it was very cool. Once again, that song prevails with flying stripes. The ball teams have all been using it, and now these guys. And yeah, we do have a new version of it coming out. The *Revelation* CD consists of 11 new songs and 11 redone greatest hits, which sound pretty amazing to my ears.

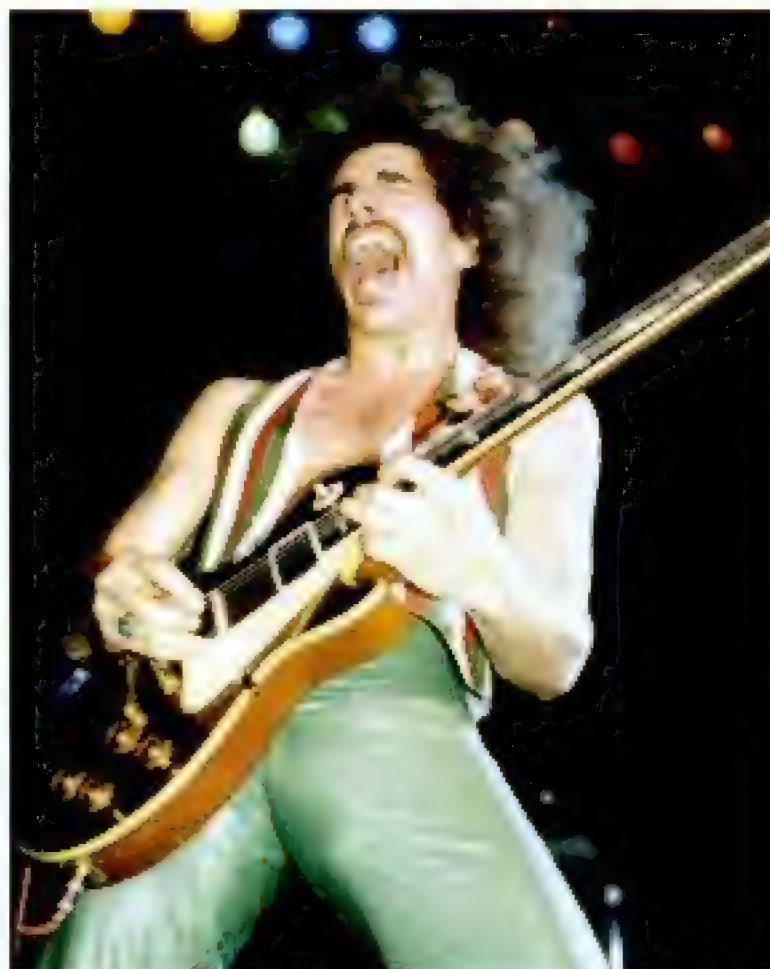
I heard you found your new singer, Arnel Pineda, on YouTube.

—Carl Thomas

That's exactly what happened. When Steve Perry stepped down, I set out to look for a new singer. Obviously, we were looking for tenor voice, but I wasn't looking for a Steve Perry clone. I needed the right tenor who could take us into the future and still do a good job with our older catalog. I wasn't looking forward to doing auditions and flying in people from everywhere. So I thought YouTube would be a good alternative, because most all the performances posted there are live. And I figured if the guy sounds good live, then he's got it.

But after a couple days of searching I'd almost given up hope. It was really depressing. Then all of a sudden I saw this clip from a guy, Arnel Pineda, covering a Survivor song and he sounded amazing. So I tracked him down in Manila, Philippines. Then I had to convince him it was really me and not a hoax! [laughs]

You are one of the few guitarists



I would have loved to play with Eric Clapton, but I think I made the right choice in playing with Santana."

who use their pinkie with such dexterity. Did you make a conscious effort to develop pinkie strength to use it for solos?

—David Bernstein

Everything I do in solos is based on something that's come to me naturally. It's nothing I've really worked on. But I've been playing for so many years that I think I've naturally expanded in different directions over time. I don't practice, but I have strengthened my fingers just by playing new patterns and scales throughout the years.

Do you ever think about where your musical career would have gone if you accepted Eric Clapton's offer to join Derek and the Dominos?

—Morrison Day

You know, I've actually thought about that a lot. Part of me kicks myself in the butt for not doing it, because I was such a fan of Eric Clapton. But he wanted me to move to England. I had just turned 15 and wasn't quite ready to leave the Bay Area. Also, I had a gut instinct about it. After all, the whole band was, let's just say, well medicated. [laughs] I remember walking backstage, like, 10 minutes before they went on, and everybody was snoozing. [Laughs] So I was like, I don't think this thing is

gonna last that long. I would have loved to do it, but I think I made the right choice by going with Santana.

I think many of your memorable solos come from *Escape* [Journey's 1981 album]. Do you feel that that album epitomized the high point of your playing style at that time?

—Shannon Aldridge

Yeah, that album was one of the heights of our career. There were really no boundaries at that time. We were trying a lot of stuff and mixing a lot of different types of music together. Actually, that was one of the reasons that a lot of critics used to pan us, because they couldn't categorize us.

You have played with so many great musicians. Are there any other artists you'd love to work with?

—Nikki "Bella" Donna

I've been working on a project at the Record Plant in Sausalito, and everyone is on this thing: Stevie Wonder, Carlos Santana, Buddy Miles, Randy Jackson... But when I think, Who do I really have to play with, no one person comes to mind. That said, I'm open-minded about playing with anyone that approaches me...if they're good. [laughs]

What do you recommend to a player who is seeking to be as fluent as possible in many rock styles?

—Patrick McMan

I think it all comes down to what you listen to. It's said that you are what you eat, and to that I would add, you are what you listen to. I think you can't be close-minded when it comes to listening. I listen to everything from classical music to John McLaughlin. Compared to when I was a kid—when there were, like, 10 players I could point to as my favorites—today there are so many people for kids to listen to and learn from.

Gibson has honored you by making a signature model. What's next? A budget model?

—Wallace Ming

Yeah, I'm actually working with them on new products right now. We're updating my guitar and simplifying it so they can make more units. They had a really hard time pumping out numbers of my guitars. The interest was there, but they had a hard time making them. □

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Emperor of the North

His influential black metal band may have reached the end of its line, but with his new solo album, *ang L*, former Emperor guitarist ILSAHN continues his reign as Norway's progressive metal monarch.

By Brad Angle | Photographs by Jimmy Hubbard







reflective sunglasses and sitting cross-legged on a leather couch. He rises, smiling, to meet us and offers a firm handshake, seemingly unaware—or unconcerned—about the sideways glances of the hotel guests and exceedingly nonmetal townsfolk.

"Welcome to Notodden," he says. "Shall we start with a tour of my studio?" And off we go to Symphonique Studios, Ihsahn's private recording facility.

In many respects, Notodden is not unlike the countless small towns in the States that are isolated from the thriving musical and artistic scenes of large cities. In such out-of-the-way places, when musically minded adolescent boys get restless, they tend to start bands. And sometimes that leads to trouble.

In the early Nineties, Emperor were just a group of metalhead kids who played music, in part as an outlet for their youthful aggression and the frustrations of small-town life, which included getting hassled by locals who didn't like their black outfits, long hair, spiked accoutrements and corpse paint. The situation got worse as black metal bands in Oslo became involved in church burnings and murders and gained worldwide press for their violent acts.

Emperor suffered some troubling setbacks during this time.

Samoth was imprisoned for arson, and original drummer Bard "Faust" Eithun was convicted of murder. But under Ihsahn's steady hand, the band carried on, eventually releasing four highly influential studio records before calling it quits in 2001. In 2005, much to the delight of Emperor fans across the world, the band's core members—Ihsahn, guitarist Samoth and drummer Trym—reformed to play a few select international reunion dates, which led to sporadic one-offs throughout 2006 and 2007, culminating in a headlining spot at the Wacken Open Air festival in Germany.

Over the years, Ihsahn has remained tirelessly creative. The multi-instrumentalist has released experimental metal (with wife Heidi Tveitan) under the name Peccatum, folk metal with Hardingrock and progressive metal as Ihsahn, all while he continues to teach guitar to budding shredders in and around Notodden.

But it's with his latest full-length, *angL*, that Ihsahn comes into his own as a solo artist. Where his 2006 solo effort, *The Adversary*, was the sound of an excited musician exploring many ideas that wouldn't fit into the parameters of Emperor, *angL* takes the best parts of that record and forges them into one cohesive effort. The result is a powerhouse album of progressive metal filled with seething vocals, inventive rhythmic structures and rough-and-ready riffs.

Arriving at Symphonique, we're led into the main recording studio, a tidy, efficient room that reflects the tastes of its designer. The space is filled with stacks of guitars, racks of effects, several amps, keyboards, consoles, mics, monitors, Gold records and, disturbingly, a human skeleton suspended on a medical display stand. We sit down

The drive from Oslo to the rural town of Notodden, Norway, is about one hour into the heart of rugged Telemark County. On a bright, cold day in March, *Guitar World* is making the trek to visit former Emperor guitarist/vocalist Ihsahn in his hometown, where he has just finished recording his second solo album, the forceful and progressively black metal effort *angL* (Candlelight/Mnemosyne).

It was here in this town of 2,000 people, nearly 20 years ago, that Ihsahn and a few friends—guitarist Samoth, drummer Trym and bassist Mortiis—founded Emperor and effectively launched the symphonic black metal sound that influenced scores of extreme bands, from Dimmu Borgir to Children of Bodom. As we navigate through the myriad winding mountain roads, snow-capped peaks and ominous evergreen forests, under the sweeping maneuvers of the ever-present black birds, it becomes crystal clear how the epic, grim qualities inherent in Norwegian black metal could be born out of such a dramatic, beautiful and utterly brutal landscape.

Upon arriving in Notodden, we check into our provincial hotel and call Ihsahn. He says he'll meet us in the lobby in 10 minutes. As we walk into the old hotel's foyer at the appointed time, we see the six-foot-plus guitarist dressed head to toe in black, his hair slicked back, wearing

with Ihsahn to discuss the finer points of creating music in isolated locations and the power of contrasting twin guitars. But first, about that skeleton in the corner...

GUITAR WORLD What's up with the skeleton? Is that real?

IHSAHN It is real. It's a Russian soldier. My wife and I found it lying around a cellar in a school somewhere. It wasn't being used for anything, so we brought him here and gave him a home. But it's all legal and properly registered.

GW How long have you been working out of this studio?

IHSAHN This studio has played a major part of everything I've done since Emperor's [2001] *Prometheus* album.

GW You have so many musical projects. Creatively speaking, what do the Ihsahn releases satisfy for you?

IHSAHN They are the metal side of what I do. With them, I don't fiddle about with so many keyboards and strange sounds; I just start out with the guitar riffs, because that's what metal is all about.

GW So you intended your first solo record, *The Adversary*, to be a metal record?

IHSAHN Yeah, I needed to do a more straightforward metal album. I tried to narrow my focus on *The Adversary*, even though it's still musically a bit all over the place. I wanted to do something inspired by Seventies progressive music and rock operas, like what Judas Priest did on *Sad Wings of Destiny*, with pianos coming in and out. As a result, *The Adversary* is kind of thin sounding, because I didn't want to fill it with layers of guitars—I wanted to keep it simple, with one guitar in each speaker, vocals in the middle. And then I added keyboards! [laughs]

But with this new record I've gone with a more contemporary way of doing it. *angL*'s got layers of guitars and a much heavier sound. I wanted to focus on what I think worked best on *The Adversary*. That album was really an experiment—an outlet to try the different metal things I couldn't do within the boundaries of Emperor. I think *angL* is more focused and introduces some new angles that I haven't tried before.

GW What would be an example of a new angle?

IHSAHN Well, I had some progressive stuff on *The Adversary*, but I think my exploration of different tunings on new tracks like "The Alchemist" is pretty different. That's a progressive track with odd beats and a DADGAD tuning, which I've never used before. I also tried new vocal styles and ways of layering vocals. But at this point I'm still really close to the album, so it's hard for me to be objective.

I worked with the same drummer I did on *The Adversary*, Asgeir Mickelson, and had Lars Norberg on bass. They're both outstanding musicians from this immensely progressive band called Spiral Architect. I started writing guitar riffs, and then I programmed the drum parts just the way I wanted them. Then I sent the files to those guys.

GW I imagine this modern recording technology really helps you maintain a more solitary life in Notodden.

IHSAHN Yeah, I think so. Earlier on I thought that maybe it was important to be in the center of things. In a small town like this it's very hard to come by musicians that can contribute and tune in to what we do. But with

today's technology that whole thing has changed. You can easily work with people whether they're in Japan, Oslo or the U.S., which really allows us to expand the creative playground. I think there's even been experiments done where recording sessions happen just using web cameras. It's really getting like *Star Trek*. Soon you'll be able to just beam over. [laughs]



Inside his studio, Symphonique

GW Do you feel your isolated location helps you stay truer to the black metal aesthetic?

ISAHN No, not really. But I think growing up in this environment...well it really forms you. There's a reason why this expression of Norwegian black metal came out of places like Notodden. Many journalists have told me when they arrive here they finally understand, after years of listening to these records, why they were created here. Experiencing this environment adds another dimension to the music. I don't think I could lose that wherever I would move to. At some point it makes sense to move to New York or L.A. and be part of all that, but it would be strange to be sitting in some very hot sunny place creating sad, black metal music. [laughs]

GW For *angL*, you also collaborated on a song

with Mikael Åkerfeldt from Opeth.

ISAHN Yes, that's true. He did a fantastic job on the song "Unhealer." It was especially amazing because he was so busy recording the new Opeth album.

GW How did he come to contribute to the album?

ISAHN I met Mikael years ago at a lunch in London. I really identified with the way he worked with his music, and since then we had been sporadically in touch. I actually talked to him prior to *The Adversary* about contributing, but that didn't work out. This time around, I met Mikael at Wacken when we played there with Emperor. He and I ended up hanging out watching Celtic Frost together and having a really good time. And when the time came to record,

I asked him to contribute again. So I wrote the lyrics and sent him the audio files. Then he managed to record the vocals at night after the Opeth sessions. It was such a surprise getting the vocals back. They are amazing.

GW Is there a consistent lyrical theme to the album?

ISAHN Ah, the same old thing. [laughs] It's the constant conflict of the individual coping with his surroundings. For my solo stuff I've been very inspired by the writings of Nietzsche and also the symbolism of Goethe and Faust.

GW Like you said earlier, *angL* is much heavier sounding than *The Adversary*. Do you feel the intensity of the Emperor reunion shows influenced this increased heaviness?

ISAHN No, not really. Earlier on, I think Emperor's extensive touring influenced what was written for [1999's] *IX Equilibrium*. But this time, I just dropped some of *The Adversary*'s constraints that I mentioned before and went from there. Take "Scarab," for example: you need very thick, heavy sounds to make that work. It has this kind of Egyptian feel to it, and the punctuation creates some nice rhythmical tension. The best riffs just come out of nowhere...and some just come out heavy. [laughs] Then there would be other riffs, like on "Emancipation," where I'd deliberately take the Locrian scale and work it out in advance. Then I would layer it with the parallel minor, so that you have thin lines going on top of this very slow minor melody.

GW What do you consider to be a signature element of your playing style?

ISAHN If anything I'd say the extensive use of contrasting twin guitars. [laughs] I've actually been criticized in my previous band for not keeping things simple enough. I guess before I finish one thing I already have the idea for the counterpoint melody line. It's very hard to turn away from that when it's already in your head. It just becomes a way of writing. I guess it can be a limitation, too, not being able to write a guitar riff that will stand on its own. There are so many classic guitar riffs that stand well on their own, and I wish I could do that. But I always tend to add a second element to it. But I must say, that can be very interesting, too.

GW What is your favorite guitar moment on *angL*?

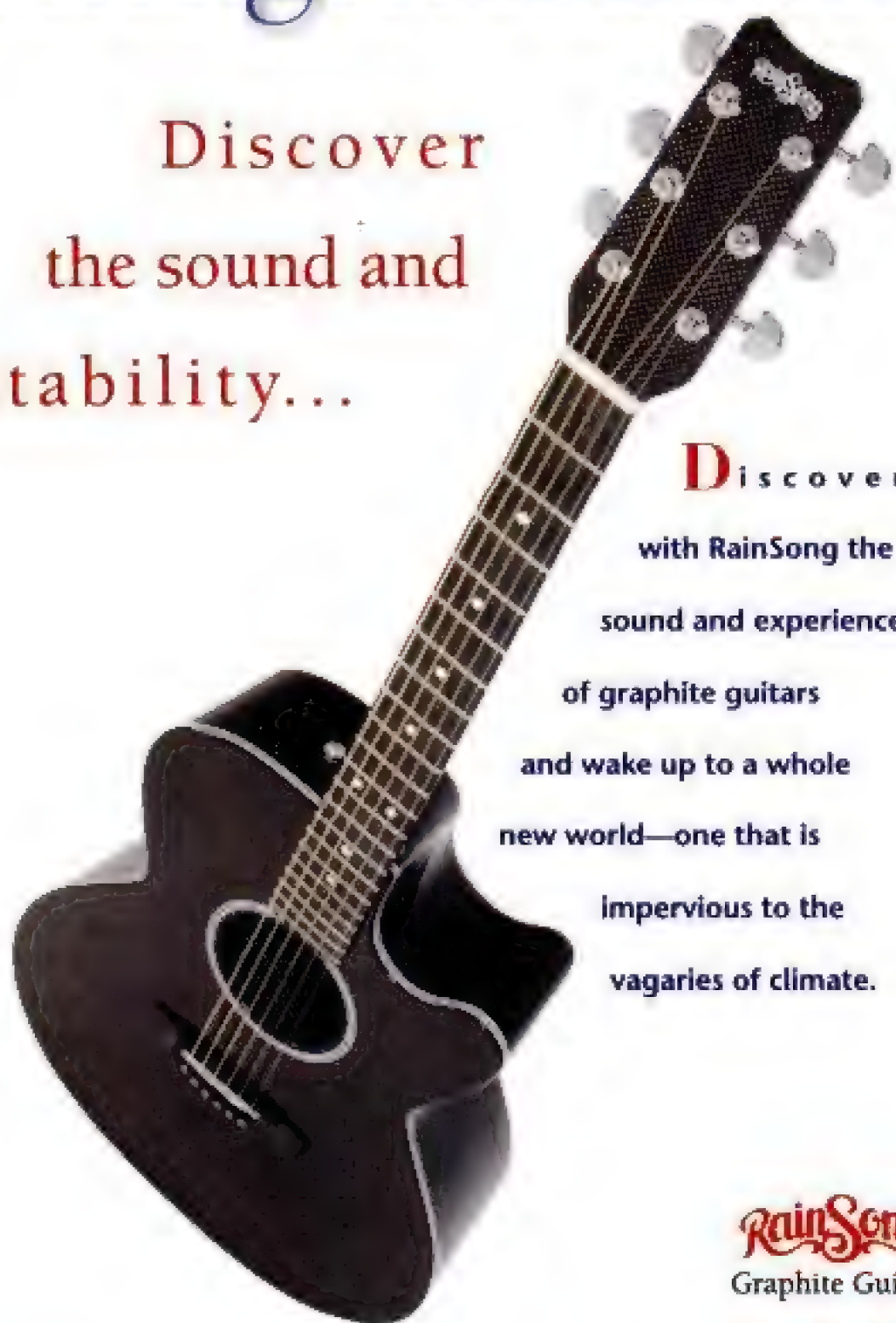
ISAHN There's more soloing on this album than I've ever done in the past, and I think I hit some really good notes. I like the solo on "Alchemist" because of its DADGAD tuning, which forced me to approach things very differently. It's so easy to get caught up in the regular patterns, movements and scales, and I've found that using a different tuning can help you feel like you're creating something new.

GW Do you prearrange your solos, or do you just start playing and then build them out of composite takes?

ISAHN I do both. Some of my riffs have odd harmonic movements, so I need to find out how to bind them all together so they make sense. But then some of them are just improvised. For some solos, I just hit record to add some placeholder solo, but since I'm relaxed and having fun when I do that, it ends up being the best take. I haven't played many solos, and I don't think I have a particular style yet. So I'm always trying different things.

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GW Have you been working on strengthening your soloing chops?

IHSAHN Nah, not really. I'm just happy to be doing stuff that I think sounds cool. I think I'm far beyond the point of becoming a shredder. I'm happy with what I can do, and I'd rather concentrate on my songwriting.

GW How did *angL*'s heavy sound affect your gear choices?

IHSAHN I used an Ibanez RG320 as my main guitar. It's a special edition from the 2006 NAMM show. It's a fantastic guitar to play. It was especially good for this album because it stayed in tune when I tried out all the different tunings. I also used the Ibanez RGA121, because it has no tremolo and also stays in tune really well. It's very nice to play. While

I usually play a set of .010-gauge strings, I used .009s on this album because it's easier to get more vibrant vibrato when the string are thinner.

GW What are your main amplifiers?

IHSAHN I've tried many different amps, but I've found that I love the very hard-hitting, transparent sound I get from my Engl. For the Emperor live shows we used the Powerballs, which are very good for extreme metal. But I bought the Savage 120 for my studio because it has a nice clean sound and good overdrive. Even though you might have it fully distorted, you can still hear the attack of the pick on the strings. That's what I like out of an amp: the ability to get the heavy tone and aggression without losing clarity.

GW You're also a fan of amp simulations and re-amping.

IHSAHN I use Guitar Rig. I just plug in, turn up the reverb with the Engl emulation and go from there. I always record a direct signal, so when I'm finished recording the guitars I can re-amp them. I hook up my Engl Savage to my two cabs—the Engl with Celestion Vintage 30 speakers and my traditional 1960 Marshall cabinet. I put two Shure 57s on them and hit record.

GW What is your approach when using effects?

IHSAHN Just delay for my solos. I had a few guitar parts that I ran through phasers and delays, but mostly I use effects for keyboards. For the most part, the album is so full of stuff already. When you have 12 guitar tracks and you start layering on phasers, choruses and effects...well it just doesn't really work.

GW You seem to have distilled your setup to its purest form.

IHSAHN I am kind of old-fashioned like that. [laughs] I've had pupils that feel they need new pickups and more expensive guitars and amps. But I've come to the conclusion that it really is all in the fingers. I've seen it so many times.

GW What kind of students do you tend to attract?

IHSAHN In the beginning, of course, I attracted a lot of the kids who wanted to play metal, but it's such a small town that I've gradually been through all those students. And some of them have developed into very fine guitar players indeed. Most of my students come to me wanting to play rock songs. When they're beginners you can always start them off with kid's songs, but I think that would turn them off pretty easily. So for beginners who need to know the basic chords, I always start out with Marilyn Manson's "In the Shadow of the Valley of Death." It's just basic chords, but they *feel* like they're playing rock music, which is the idea.

GW Do you plan to tour for the new record?

IHSAHN I have considered it. It's no big secret that I'm not a huge fan of touring. I also don't feel like going out with my new band and playing three songs off my album and doing Emperor covers for the rest. I'm just not there yet. I'd rather wait until I have a few more Ihsahn albums and then do a proper solo show of my music—with a short Emperor set for encores. [laughs]

GW Does Emperor have plans for the future, or has that project officially been put to bed?

IHSAHN Put to bed. The only reason we came back to the States was because Samoth couldn't come the first time around [due to work visa issues], so it was a good excuse to do it. It was a really nice experience. Coming from this small town and being able to play two sold-out shows at B.B. Kings in Times Square and the House of Blues in L.A., headline Wacken Open Air and hear 50,000 people scream [in metal voice] "Inno A Satana!"... That's a good feeling.

Being a Norwegian musician, it's been a great privilege to have an international career with Emperor. Having said that, I still feel I have so much more to learn and express. There are so many exciting things I want to do. *

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HIGHWAY STARS

IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES, **ZZ TOP** DECIDED IT WAS TIME FOR A MUSICAL DETOUR. BILLY GIBBONS TELLS HOW THEY MERGED THEIR LOW-DOWN BOOGIE WITH HIGH-TECH GEAR, ADOPTED A SOUPED-UP AUTOMOTIVE MASCOT AND RODE THEIR HOT-RODDED NEW SOUND TO FAME AND FORTUNE WITH **ELIMINATOR**, THEIR SMASH 1983 ALBUM.

BY ALAN DI PERNA

BILLY GIBBONS CAN STILL remember the stormy day in Houston, over a quarter of a century ago, when ZZ Top's mega-hit "Legs" came into being.

"ZZ Top had come off the road," he recalls. "We had returned to Texas. We were driving down an avenue in this fancy shopping district in Houston, and an unexpected downpour just opened up. Suddenly, there appeared this gorgeous, long-legged gal trying to dodge the raindrops. She took off running. My partners—Frank [Beard], Dusty [Hill]—and I immediately agreed, 'We need to save her, offer her a ride, get her out of this rain.' We turned the car around, but in the space of half a block, she was gone. She had vanished. She was so fast. Her legs had gotten her out of the rain. We said, 'Man, where'd she go? She got legs, and she knows how to use 'em.'"

Connoisseur, raconteur, all-around man of style and taste, Billy F. Gibbons certainly knows a killer lyrical hook when he hears one. "As luck would have it," he continues, "we were on our way to the rehearsal room. We didn't want to miss the opportunity to have some fun with this unanticipated turn of events. So we went straight in and began hammering out the remainder of the song that became 'Legs.'"

Coincidentally enough, it's a rainy day in L.A. as Billy recalls that fortuitous early Eighties afternoon. Relaxing at his home in the Hollywood Hills, the guitarist gazes out over a lush landscape daubed with fleecy patches of low-flying cloud. Earth-brown saltillo tiles glisten with moisture on the house's expansive upper balcony. But inside the house, Billy and his abundant beard are warm and dry, surrounded by select pieces from the man's world-class collections of African tribal art and



bizarre guitars. Sharp-dressed as ever, Billy's gaunt frame is draped in a slim black suit, white shirt bejeweled with sparkles, silver rings and bangles, and a voodoo junkshop's worth of weird metal objects suspended from his neck. Upstairs in the master suite, Billy's lovely wife, Gilligan, lounges in front of a massive wall-mounted TV screen.

Life is good, but maybe it wouldn't be quite so good, had

it not been for "Legs" and the 1983 blockbuster album from whence it sprang. *Eliminator*, ZZ Top's eighth release, has sold in excess of 11 million copies to date. Its triumvirate of hits—"Gimme All Your Lovin'," "Legs" and "Sharp Dressed Man"—spawned video clips that brought ZZ Top to a whole new audience and helped establish Gibbons, bassist Hill and drummer Beard as one of the biggest bands of the Eighties, if not all time. Together, *Eliminator* and the videos for those three songs became a major component of the Eighties zeitgeist. Twenty-five years after *Eliminator*'s release, it is still regarded as a rocking slab of high-tech, low-down ZZ Top boogie.

In celebration of this rock milestone, Warner Bros. is reissuing *Eliminator* in a special, 25th Anniversary Collector's Edition CD/DVD. The CD includes all 11 original album cuts plus bonus live tracks, alternate mixes and edits. The DVD collects those history-making video clips along with a hell-raisin', four-song live performance for British TV in 1983.

"*Eliminator* remains one of the more popular releases among our fans," Gibbons notes, "alongside our 1973 album, *Tres Hombres*. Those two records exemplify an interesting duality: two sides of ZZ Top. *Tres Hombres* is the sound of ZZ Top getting our feet on the ground, learning the skills required to make

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(from left) Dusty Hill,
Frank Beard and Billy
Gibson, in Chicago,
February 8, 1984



a successful recording. The flipside of that is *Eliminator*, where we had the luxury of experimenting beyond the first phases of our studio work. *Eliminator* contains some interesting attempts to learn about the new wave of technological advancements that were finding their way into the studio at that time."

When it was first released in 1983, *Eliminator* was a mite too interesting for some longtime fans, who thought it a sacrilege for ZZ Top to combine their scalding rock guitar tones with the Euro-cool pulse of synthesizers and drum machines. But while the album left some burly down-home guys scratching their heads, it provided a way for ZZ Top to move with the times.

For that matter, time has more than vindicated *Eliminator*. Seen from the perspective of 25 years later, the album remains a shining jewel in the ZZ Top canon, a rock classic containing some of their best songs, not to mention some of the nastiest guitar tones ever generated by Mr. Gibbons and his menagerie of wild guitar gear both vintage and modern.

"We didn't necessarily know what we were doing when we were making *Eliminator*," he observes. "But I think that made the completed album much more interesting."

THE ROAD TO ELIMINATOR

ZZ TOP HAD actually begun searching for a new direction several years before they entered the studio to record *Eliminator*. In the early and mid Seventies, the band had become an FM rock radio staple, thanks to the hard-edged, southern-tinged power trio sound and blue-collar, cowboy-hat-wearin', Texas wild-man image they'd cultivated on albums like *Rio Grande Mud*, *Tres Hombres*, *Fandango!* and *Tejas*.

But by the late Seventies, that was starting to get old. The entire focus and feel of rock culture had shifted in the wake of punk rock's 1976-77 explosion, and after seven years of hard touring, Billy, Dusty and Frank needed a break. They took a two-year hiatus starting in 1977. Billy traveled to England and France, soaking up the European art rock aesthetic of artists like Brian Eno, Robert Fripp and Robert Wyatt. He also hung with reggae legend Bob Marley for a while. Frank Beard spent some time in Jamaica too. Singly and collectively, the band's outlook broadened and became more global.

When ZZ Top reemerged in 1979, they had a brand-new record label (Warner Bros.) and a crazy new look. Unbeknownst to one another, Gibbons and Hill had grown long beards during their time apart. This chance occurrence, born of nothing more than a reluctance to wield the razor on a daily basis, became the band's new visual hook.

The new facial appendages tied in with ZZ Top's earlier, hillbilly/shit-kicker image. And as the beards grew in, interestingly enough, the cowboy hats were gradually phased out. The new accessory of choice was dark glasses, worn both day and night. In fact, ZZ Top's new theme song became "Cheap Sunglasses," from their first Warner Bros. album, 1979's *Degüello*. The dime-store shades resonated with the burgeoning new wave aesthetic.



That little ol' band from Texas had morphed into postmodern hipsters.

Throughout history, in life and fiction, a long beard has often served as a handy disguise. While the mass media focused on the new whiskers, ZZ Top proceeded to change their sound and musical approach radically, without causing consternation among fans or critics. *Degüello* and its 1981 successor, *El Loco*, sported a sleek new sonic silhouette. Billy had all but jettisoned the grainy, distorted tone of his 1959 Les Paul, "Pearly Gates," blasting through a vintage tweed amp. In its place was a clean, chorused sound that was closer to Steely Dan/L.A. session-cat sophistication.

The ZZ Top lyrical stance shifted, as well, to the more elliptical, risqué and obliquely ironic style of tunes like "A Fool for Your Stockings," "Pearl Necklace" and "Cheap Sunglasses." Gone was the horny working-man's yowl of earlier classics like "Tush" and "La Grange." ZZ Top were still libidinous, but in a detached, double entendre kind of way.

And so it was that, as the Eighties dawned, Gibbons, Hill and Beard found a way to bring back the crank without losing the postmodern edge.

NEW TOYS

ZZ TOP ENTERED Memphis' Ardent studios in 1982 to begin work on the album that would become *Eliminator*. Ardent had been the band's workshop, playground and recording HQ ever since mixing sessions for 1973's *Tres Hombres*. The trio had formed a close working relationship with studio owner John Fry and his engineering staff of Terry Manning, John Hampton and Joe Hardy. Gearhead obsession was one common bond, and on *Eliminator*, it was renewed with abundance.

"When we got back into Ardent to make *Eliminator*," Gibbons recalls, "the storage vault for gear had increased threefold. The uncharted new rooms had all this weird new stuff: new amps, new outboard gear, synthesizers, drum machines... We were fascinated by these new contraptions that we knew nothing about. They drew us in with such vigor that we completely ignored the owners' manuals. There was no reading of manuals; it was just too boring. We wanted hands-on immediacy."

From the studio's collection, the band selected an Oberheim DMX drum machine and, for bass tones, a Moog Source. These instruments were tastefully interwoven with real-time playing from Frank Beard and Dusty Hill to create the potent combination that



“YOU HAD TO **STAY UP ALL NIGHT**, HANGING OUT WITH THE GOOD-LOOKIN’ GALS, DRIVIN’ FAST CARS. GOOD COMBO.”

recorded was “Legs,” the tune inspired by that elusive beauty back in Houston. “‘Legs’ is one that’s hard to pocket in one of the three phases of the album’s recording sessions,” Billy notes. “We had the structure and the words. But the last piece to fall into the mix was the staccato synth line. That didn’t fall into place until we were closing the sessions. By that time we’d had a chance to dig into the new technology. That synth line was the icing on the cake that really made for an interesting sound for that period.”

“Legs” perfectly encapsulates *Eliminator*’s powerful modus operandi. It’s an effective combination of wildly disparate elements: a Chuck Berry-ish guitar riff, a disco sequencer pulse that could’ve come right off a Giorgio Moroder production for Donna Summer, and an old school r&b chord progression—E, C♯m, A, B—that dates back to the Fifties, if not earlier. Billy is particularly proud of the solo chord modulations in “Legs,” which take off from C♯m and move around the circle of fifths, to F♯m and then B. In the dance remix of “Legs,” the solo section gets extended, looping round and round like a flying saucer before finally resolving.

“The old adage about ZZ Top is that we’re the same three guys playing the same three chords that were brought to us by the great art form called the blues,” Billy observes. “But ‘Legs’ has an interesting solo bridge. The chord structure departs far and away from a simple three-chord pattern, finally landing on the V chord [B] to get back into the verse. So that too was an interesting composition musically to go with some juicy lyrics.”

The first single released from *Eliminator* was “Gimme All Your Lovin’.” “That song came in the middle of the recording process,” Billy explains. “It was one of the bits left over from the first phase. We had basically an outline of an arrangement musically, but we had no words written. And I remember having a brief phone conversation with Mick Jagger. He was engaging in a solo project at the time, and somehow the subject of lyrics and content entered the discussion. I left that exchange inspired by the Rolling Stones and the way I envisioned their songwriting process. So the music track was already laid down, and in one sweeping moment I composed the lyrics in the hotel as I was preparing to leave for the studio. It was one of those moments that comes to you in a flash, unexpectedly. But having spoken to Jagger, I was in a rather accelerated frame of mind and aiming for the Rolling Stones’ aesthetic.”

Eliminator’s third monster hit, “Sharp Dressed Man,” emerged from a trip to the movies. “The closing credits rolled by, and we were sitting in the theater waiting to see who the director was and all of that,” Billy recalls. “The cast of characters was rolling by and one of them was listed as the Sharp-Eyed Man. So

I was trying to remember which character in the film was the Sharp-Eyed Man, which later morphed into ‘Sharp Dressed Man.’”

Try as he might, Billy can’t remember the name of the film that gave rise to this revelation, though it was probably *The Amateur*; the John Savage/Christopher Plummer thriller was released in February 1982 and features a character credited as “Sharp-Eyed Man.” Whatever the case, Gibbons’ instinct for latching onto a great lyrical hook didn’t fail him. “Once you’ve got ‘the girls go crazy ‘bout a sharp dressed man,’ that’s all you really need,” he says. “Fill in a few items of clothing, clean shirt, new shoes...and you’ve got a song.”

As Gibbons explains, “the essence of *Eliminator* was including so many compositions with memorable lyrical hook lines—either the first line of the verse or the first line of the chorus. When you stop and think about memorable songs, there’s really only one or two lines that stand out. When we were working on *Eliminator*, we’d have these songwriter shootouts to see who in the room could actually repeat an entire song word for word. We sang Howlin’ Wolf and Muddy Waters songs like ‘Rollin’ Stone,’ or Eric Clapton’s ‘Cocaine,’ which was actually written by J.J. Cale, and even ‘Hotel California.’ And it basically came down to, ‘Well, I know the first line of the chorus. That’s all I know!’”

“Sharp Dressed Man” is also graced with a particularly memorable solo section, in which Billy alternates slide playing with conventional fretting. He comes off the slide as the song moves from its tonic chord, C, to the second chord in the progression, F. It’s a tricky move to nail, especially if you don’t realize that Billy is playing in an open tuning.

“I played that solo in open E [low to high, E B E G♯ B E],” he explains. “We experimented with open G and A, but open E was the favorite. Keep in mind that, before *Eliminator*, we recorded a version of Elmore James’ ‘Dust My Broom’ for *Degüello*, which was also in open E. And the day we went into the studio to record ‘Sharp Dressed Man,’ we just happened to warm up on ‘Dust My Broom.’ The engineer said, ‘Why don’t you play some Elmore James stuff to get you in a bluesy frame of mind?’ So we were left with a guitar tuned to open E.

“Eventually, when we went and recorded the basic backing tracks for ‘Sharp Dressed Man,’ I played the basic guitar track in standard tuning. But when it came time for overdubbing solos, I grabbed the guitar that was still in open E from our earlier jam on the Elmore James tune. So it was time to do some quick transposition. The challenge was coming off the slide solo and fingering the rest of the solo in open tuning. But it worked out. It just requires a movement down two frets from where you’d be in standard to find that 7th note, which is really the blue note within most structures.”

would bring ZZ Top into the Eighties and their era of greatest commercial triumph: raunchy rock guitar sounds coupled with the pounding drive and unrelenting rhythmic precision of electronic dance music and synth-pop.

But *Eliminator* wouldn’t be *Eliminator* without its killer cache of hooky hits. The big winners, “Gimme All Your Lovin’,” “Legs” and “Sharp Dressed Man,” presented themselves at different phases of the recording process.

“*Eliminator* was assembled in three stages,” Billy explains. “The first was the obvious: bringing in material that we had written on the road or in rehearsal sessions before going into the studio. The second phase was assembling the bits and pieces that were left over from those rehearsals and the first stage of recording. And the final stretch found us composing and creating while in the studio. That’s not unusual. In recording, getting started is the uphill challenge, but once the momentum catches on, the process of completion is an easier bit of business. You’re already into it, you’ve got the sounds, the microphones haven’t moved, everybody has their minds focused on the creative process... In my opinion, it becomes more free flowing. The longer you’re in there, the easier it gets.”

One of the very first tracks the band

Onstage in Chicago,
February 1984



FUTURISTIC VINTAGE

NATURALLY, BILLY BROUGHT along some choice items from his extensive guitar and amp collection when ZZ Top descended on Ardent for the *Eliminator* sessions. "Pearly Gates of course was the backbone," he says, paying homage to his legendary and much loved 1959 sunburst Les Paul, which is equipped with a particularly ferocious pair of Gibson's original PAF humbucking pickups. "And there was always a Fender Esquire on hand," Billy adds. "I've got two favorites, a '51 with a black pickguard and a '56 with a white guard and bigger neck.

"And we used some oddball stuff. Dean Zelinsky [of Dean Guitars] sent down a couple of things. He was making a short-scale guitar that had a combination of an Explorer and a Flying V body. It was an Explorer with a V tail, basically, but it had a three-quarter neck, making it a shorter-scale instrument. It was difficult to tune, but it just smoked. Besides that, we had a few Gretsches, a few Nationals..."

A well-worn 1955 Gretsch Roundup provided the beguilingly glassy tone for the low-string figure Billy plays in the breakdown sections of "TV Dinners," another hot single from *Eliminator*. "It was that Gretsch with the toggle switch selector in the middle position," he elaborates. "So both pickups were on and everything was turned up full. Those mid-Fifties Gretsch guitars are the only instruments that can capture that sound. You can come close on a Fender Jazzmaster. It has a peculiar sound much like the Gretsch with both pickups on. You get that surf-like quality."

Billy's amp choices for *Eliminator* also

exemplify his tendency to mix the familiar with the obscure. Along with Marshalls and Fenders, one of the key amps for the album was a Legend, a brand that's little remembered today. "A friend of ours in New York began manufacturing a tube amp called Legend," Billy explains. "It was a 50-watt combo in an unfinished wood cabinet with a cane grille cloth. There were two versions. They made some modifications to the original circuit, but we had the first wave to come off the assembly line. We still have that amp, in fact. That was part of the formula on *Eliminator*. It consistently sounded good."

Around the time of *Eliminator*, Billy developed an obsession with vintage 18-watt combo

amps. He began collecting tweedy old 18-watt 2x12 Fender Dual Professionals and mid-Sixties 18-watt Marshall combos, being particularly fond of the 2x12 model 1972 18-watt Marshall. All of these and more figured in the making of *Eliminator*. "We also had a tweed Fender Deluxe, a tweed Fender Champ..." he adds. "They all held a promise to deliver something really interesting to listen to. And we said, 'Why restrict it to just one? We may find a combination of these amps that works.'"

That approach proved to be a logistical nightmare when it came to miking so many amps in the studio. Thus, the infamous "amp cabin" came into being. "Instead of lining up 10 or 15 amplifiers with a mic on each one, or having to move a mic each time we wanted to try a different amp," Billy explains, "we built a square of amps, all of them facing inward, with one microphone in the middle. And we put a second stack of amps on top of those, all different ones. The idea was to put every type of amp on there. As for the third row of amps, we didn't want them to get too far from the mic, so they were put on top, aiming down."

"And somebody said, 'Looks like a little ol' cabin.' So we named it the 'amp cabin.' We had one of every odd, previously unused amp in this structure, just to see how it would sound."

But it wasn't all small combo amps on *Eliminator*. "One of the great tonal combinations," Billy says, "was a 100-watt Marshall, either single cabinet or a stack of two, and a solid-state Vox Super Beatle. The Super Beatle did something that the Marshall didn't, and vice versa. But combined, the sound was really rich. I'm pretty sure that

ZZ TOP: LIVE ON DVD

On June 24, Eagle Rock Entertainment will release *ZZ Top Live from Texas* on DVD and Blu-ray. The two-hour disc is loaded with live versions of 17 ZZ Top classics, including "Pearl Necklace," "Sharp Dressed Man," "Legs," "Tush" and others. Bonus features include a poker-table interview with Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard, a behind-the-scenes look at show day in Dallas and ZZ Top's reinterpretation of Jimi Hendrix's "Foxy Lady."





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'Gimme All Your Lovin' and 'Sharp Dressed Man' enjoyed that combination."

In tandem with the explosion of synth and drum machine gear that shaped the distinctive tonal aesthetic of the early Eighties, it was also a time when a wide range of effect pedals and rackmount devices were flooding the musical instrument market. Many of these also found their way onto *Eliminator*.

"Different effects were showing up at the studio daily," Billy recalls. "MXR was a brand that started coming up with some interesting stuff, including this rackmount harmonizer. It had some additional features that led us into a nether world of experimentation. At one point we figured out a way to chain three harmonizers together using one signal source. This was pre-MIDI, so any real time control of parameters had to be manual, which meant you could play a harmonized solo, and if the engineer knew the chord changes he could advance between intervals, which would allow you to play in key with the right harmonic intervals between notes. We did one with three changes. We limited it to that."

But perhaps the single most important micro device employed for guitar sounds on *Eliminator* was the Rockman, the headphone preamp invented by Tom Scholz, guitarist for the classic rock band Boston. The Rockman became a ubiquitous device in the early Eighties. And there were even rumors that all the guitar sounds on *Eliminator* were recorded on a Rockman direct injected [D.I.ed] into the tape

machine. Billy dismisses this but grants that the Rockman did have a role in creating *Eliminator*'s signature distortion tone—a profoundly tough, "squared-off" flavor of overdrive that is short on sustain but long on punch.

Notes Billy, "The standard-issue Rockman came with a few settings, and the delightful experience was a left-right [stereo] chorusing that, however, couldn't be disengaged. So I called Tom and said, 'Could you possibly create a Rockman with just a mono signal out?' He said, 'Are you sure? There's such a wonderful stereo signal going out.' I said, 'We're simple guys playing simple music. How about a simple Rockman?' He said, 'I never thought of that. Let me get back to you.'

"And sure enough, the next day we had a Rockman that had been modified to keep the distortion section of the circuit and bypass the straight stereo chorusing into a straight mono signal. That, in conjunction with the amplifier, provided a push/pull experience. The engineers found a place within the stereo spectrum to put each one [i.e., the direct Rockman signal and the miked amp signal] and maintain a focus right down the center. I consider it important in creating a sound that allowed the guitar to remain hard, raucous and raunchy rock in the midst of some dramatically different sonic elements [i.e., synths and drum machines] that had previously never shown up on any other ZZ Top recording. It possibly constitutes one of the dramatic elements that allowed the record to go on and become a big seller."

But *Eliminator* is more than just its three or four hit singles. It's a full-on album in the classic rock sense: 11 unassailably solid tunes that offer up stylistic variety and deliver everything ZZ Top fans have come to expect from the hirsute triumvirate. There are not one but two lusty Dusty Hill rock and roll screamers, "I Got the Six" and "Bad Girl." There's also the lovely slow blues, "I Need You Tonight."

"There seems to be at least one slow blues on every ZZ Top album," Billy notes. " 'I Need You Tonight' was the one track where it just didn't work to double Dusty's bass track with a synth bass. On other tracks the synth bass added richness, but try as we might, we couldn't make it work on that one song. Dusty's bass line had been laid down on top of the drums and rhythm guitar, and at the end of the day we decided that this was one interesting live performance that defied being tethered to any external device. So we just let it live as it was."

The solo sections on "I Need You Tonight" boast yearning guitar leads enhanced by warm, tape-based echo. "Ardent's owner, John Fry, had got his feet on the ground working at Stax [Memphis' legendary R&B studio]," Billy notes. "And a lot of that old-school analog mindset came into Ardent and lingered on. They had a variable-speed analog tape machine that was used to create any kind of slapback or delay. Back then, there were very few echo devices available other than the Echoplex or the Roland Space Echo. There

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were no digital delay units on the streets at that time, but Ardent had this old 1/4-inch tape machine that they carried from room to room, depending on who required it. It operated on a power system that was divided into two stages. One provided a steady 110 volts to keep the amplifier section running, but the tape reel motor ran off a variable speed oscillator [VSO] that increased or decreased the available power and therefore the speed of the motor. So the echo repeats could be placed in time with the song.

"Eliminator is a peculiar example of the lingering days of analog looking ahead to a bold new excursion into the digital domain. Nowadays, of course, anything goes. You can mix and match analog and digital, or you can be strictly analog or strictly digital if you want. But *Eliminator* was one of the first examples of a hybrid analog/digital, experimental kind of approach."

UNLIKELY VIDEO IDOLS

WHILE *ELIMINATOR* IS certainly satisfying as a purely musical experience, the profound mass-culture impact and enormous commercial success of the album is inextricably linked to the trio of video clips for "Gimme All Your Lovin'," "Legs" and "Sharp Dressed Man." For any rock fan—or anyone, for that matter—who was around in the early Eighties, it is impossible to hear even a few bars of any of these songs without having visual images from the clips immediately spring to mind: the flashy

Eliminator car (a custom hot-rodded 1933 Ford coupe), the trio of hot Eighties babes, and the avuncular presence of ZZ Top themselves flashing the signature hand-jive mudra formally known as "the presentation."

It was a pivotal moment in rock history. MTV had been launched in 1981, broadcasting nothing but music video clips 24/7. Unfortunately, content was scarce. Most rock and pop artists weren't routinely making promotional video clips back then. So early MTV tended to be dominated by fashion conscious and visually literate British synth-pop acts like Depeche Mode, Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet, and dance-oriented artists like Michael Jackson and Madonna, whose visual "song-and-dance" mode of presentation was ahead of the curve when it came to video.

Into this stylish arena, in 1983, came three grizzled sidewinders from Texas, unlikely but ultimately welcome guests at this strange new party. "We had a couple of forward-thinking, behind-the-scenes guys," Billy explains, "and saw the opportunity to engage in this new thing called 'video.'"

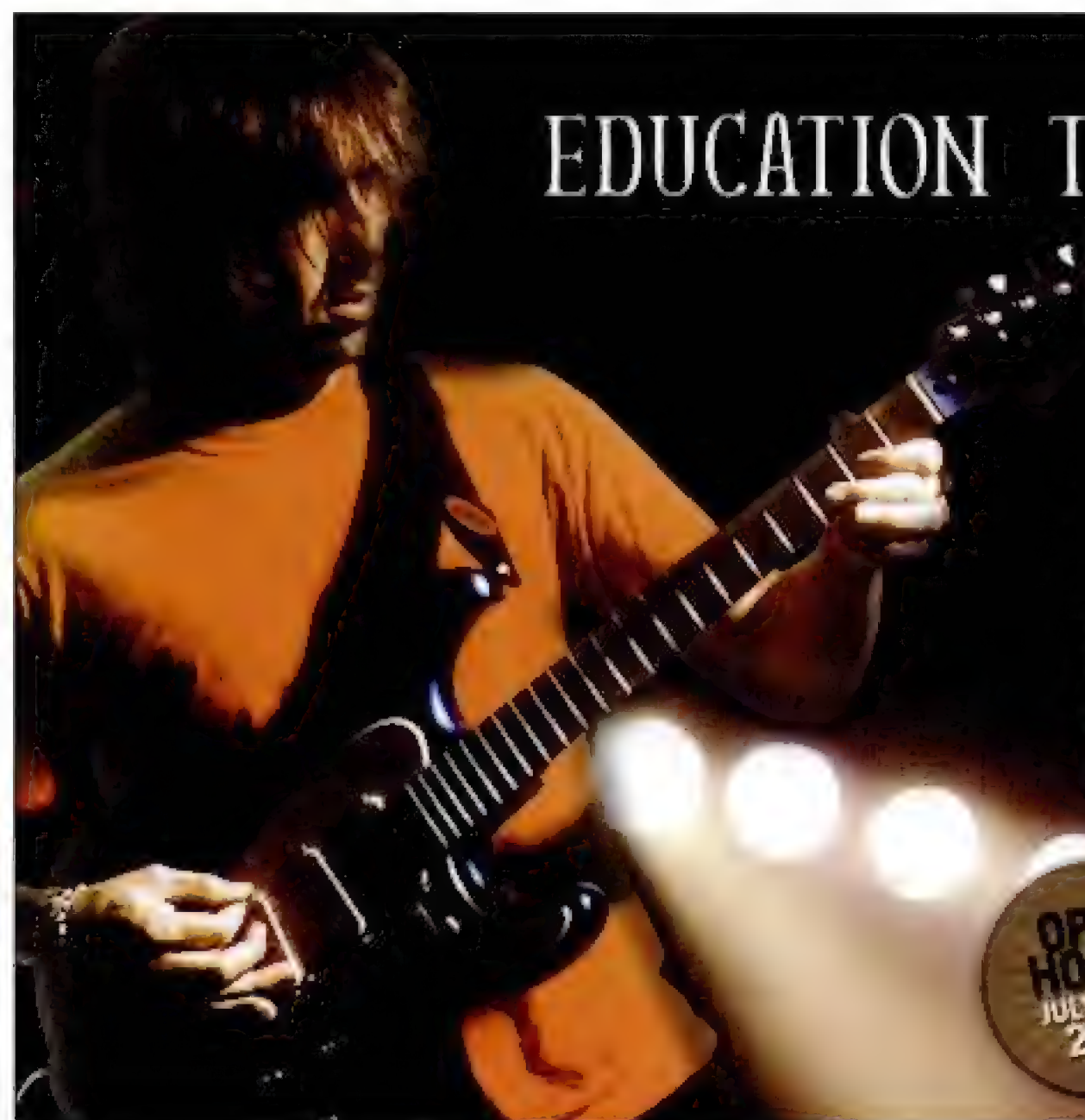
Billy had long been an aficionado of dirt-track hot-rod culture in particular. He'd worked with automotive chop artists Pete Chapouris and Jake Jacobs to create the *Eliminator* car, which became a central trope for both the album and the videos. "Eliminator" is a speedway term for a winning vehicle—the one that tops, or eliminates, all competition. Drag-strip artist Tom Hunnicutt created the

myth-making graphic illustration of the car for the album's cover, and it was a no-brainer to include the car itself in the promotional clips for the album.

In bringing their unique aesthetic to the video screen, ZZ Top found an ideal ally in director Tim Newman. Newman's grasp on American pop culture feel had been honed through his advertising work for Coca-Cola. "He had done so much work that involved bright lights and neon signs and pretty girls with cars," Gibbons says. "And he liked what we did—he liked the fact that we had the car and that the gals wanted to get on camera." Newman's first video was for "Gimme All Your Lovin'" and was followed by clips for "Sharp Dressed Man" and "Legs," creating what the band calls the "ZZ Top Trilogy."

As director, Newman faced a unique challenge: how to create an appealing pop music video clip around three guys who, by their own admission, were hardly photogenic, no longer in the full flower of youth and whose sex appeal would be apparent to only a very small, highly bizarre percentage of the viewing public. The answer was to create narrative, rather than performance-based, video clips in which ZZ Top appear on the sidelines of the main action, yet are still somehow essential to the proceedings, like the chorus in ancient Greek drama.

So each of the clips features the same elements: the Eliminator car, a trio of sexy girls tricked out in full Eighties hot regalia and a



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young, working-class protagonist caught in a dead-end job. In each video, ZZ Top appear, quasi magically thanks to a video "dissolve" effect, and deliver the protagonist from his or her mundane existence. The car is, quite literally, the vehicle of deliverance. The symbolically charged moment occurs when Billy, Dusty and Frank toss the keys to the car, glistening with video enhancement and adorned with the ZZ Top logo, to the protagonist. Thus, the band function, in essence, as magical benefactors: the three wise men. The car keys become the Gift of the Magi.

Amid all the eye candy flashed by the video trilogy, guitar geeks were quick to pick up on the outlandish instruments wielded by Billy and Dusty. In the "Gimme All Your

Lovin'" and "Sharp Dressed Man" videos they perform on vintage, yet strangely headless Fenders (a Strat and P-Bass respectively), emblazoned with racing pinstripes. What no one knew was that these sharp-looking axes weren't actually playable.

"The headless Fender guitars were the genius brainstorm of our friend Jim Hammond, who was in Fort Worth, Texas," Gibbons explains. "Around this time, the first headless Steinberger guitars had started to show up in videos, and I remember seeing Andy Summers playing the [Giltier] fishbone skeletal guitar, which was really outside. So the headless guitar seemed to be the order of the day. Well, we had none."

Gibbons and Hill gave Hammond a pair of

matching Fenders—Olympic white, with tortoise shell pickguards—and asked if he could help them out. "He went into his back room where he had a construction shop," Gibbons recalls. "He pulled out a big band saw and cut the headstocks off, got some fishing line and drew it down the back to replace the strings. And those were our headless instruments. We got plenty of questions, like 'How did you tune those things?' The good news is you can get away with that on film."

On the other hand, the white fur-covered Gibson Explorers seen in the "Legs" video are fully playable. Gibbons had been messing with fur-lined guitars ever since the Sixties, when he first saw such an instrument on the cover of an album by his hero, Bo Diddley. Over the years he'd moved closer and closer to perfection in realizing this highly unorthodox design goal.

"The furry guitars seen in the 'Legs' video were created by Matthew Klein, who was overseeing the custom shop at Gibson at the time," Billy explains. "We sheared a path under the strings to allow them to remain functional and playable. We still have those guitars and still use them."

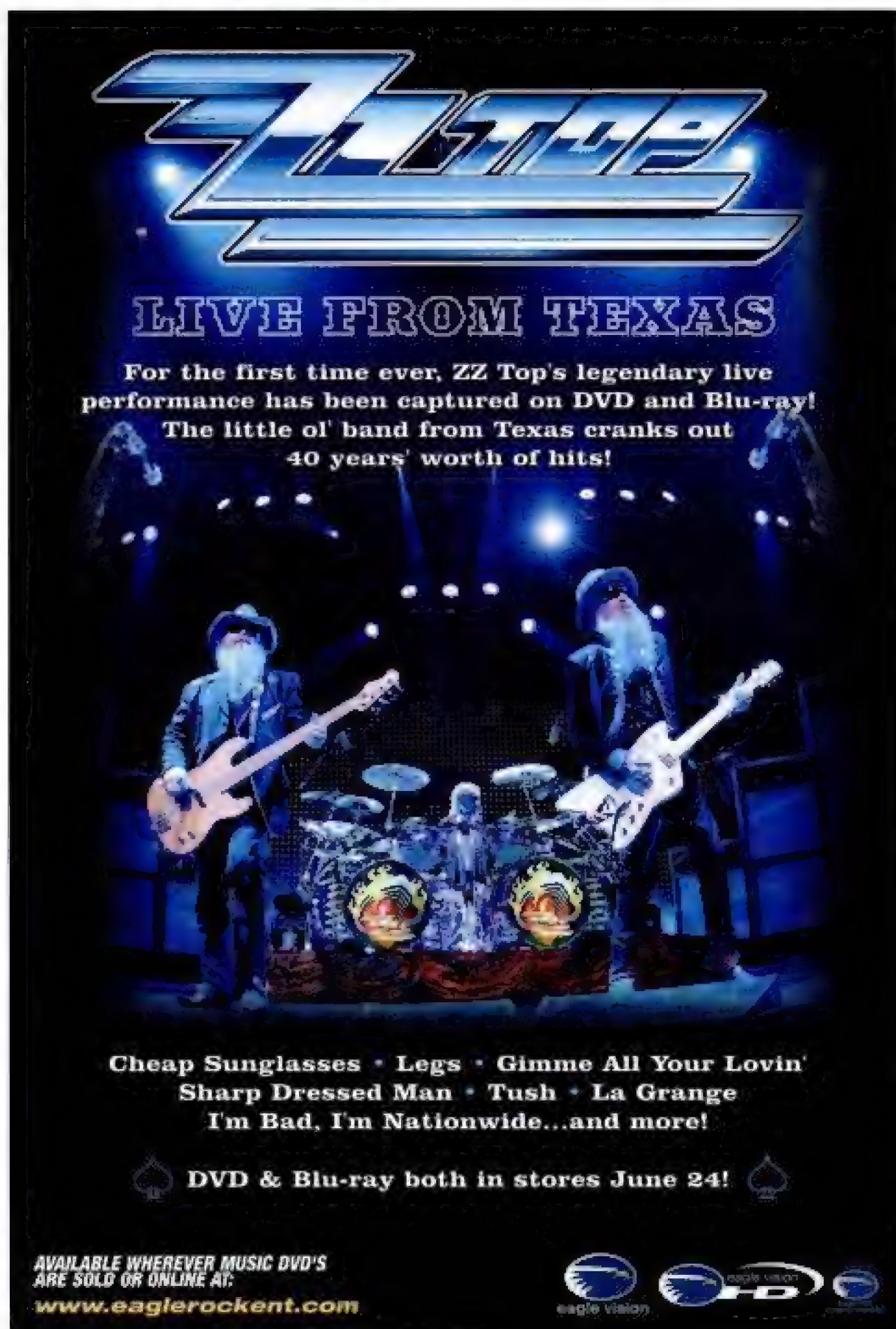
The ultimate sight gag, as seen in the video, is that the guitars can be spun like 360 degrees. The device that makes this possible was invented by Don "D.F." Summers, bassist for Billy's pre-ZZ Top, Sixties psychedelic garage rock band, the Moving Sidewalks.

"The Moving Sidewalks were out on the Jimi Hendrix tour back in the late Sixties," Billy recalls. "And [Summers] dreamed up this contraption then. The one element to remember with spinning instruments is to keep your head out of the way. As the neck passes by you don't want to get knocked on the head."

THE NEVER-ENDING QUEST

The *Eliminator* formula was so successful that ZZ Top repeated it on two more albums, 1985's *Afterburner* and 1990's *Recycler*. The "raunchy guitars and robotic synths" combo was wearing thin by the time of the third disc, but ZZ Top had built sufficient momentum to move on from Warner Bros. and ink a phenomenally lucrative deal with RCA. In the time since then, they've gone back to a stripped-down three-piece approach, heard on the albums *Antenna*, *Rhythmmean*, *XXX* and *Mescalero*. Their sound grows ever more hallucinogenically grainy and fiercely angular, and at times veers into Captain Beefheart/Tom Waits territory.

While Dusty Hill has suffered some health issues recently, Billy feels confident that ZZ Top will continue to ride the swiftly changing currents of pop culture and entertainment. As the transformations of the *Eliminator* period prove, Billy F. Gibbons is not a man who's afraid of change. He says he remains intrigued by "the possibility of taking it a step higher, taking it a little bit further. It becomes a bit surreal. 'Cause we're not sure where we're going, but we've managed to linger through a period where now things are changing so quickly that it's become novel in a way that Salvador Dali and the Dadaists predicted. They said that at some point the future will bring, moment by moment, a surrealistic experience just by staying alive. That's a good one." ♦



ZZ TOP

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DAN DONEGAN



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DAN DONEGAN USED TO BANG NAILS FOR A LIVING. POURED HIS FAIR SHARE OF CONCRETE, TOO. HE WAS PRETTY GOOD AT IT. SOME MIGHT SAY HE HAD IT MADE. WORKING FOR HIS FATHER'S CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, A UNION JOB THAT PAID WELL, DONEGAN WAS RIDING THE E-2 PASS LANE TO THE AMERICAN DREAM: PROMISING CAREER, SOLID CRAFT, SOUND FUTURE. AND THEN HE THREW IT ALL AWAY BY JOINING SOME POOL METAL BAND.

"It definitely could have been a disastrous decision," Donegan says, with a laugh. The thick-muscled guitarist, who could easily clank a few weights with Zakk Wylde, no sweat, is seated in the *Guitar World* offices, having just finished a photo shoot for this month's cover. "Another dream accomplished," he says of this, his first solo GW cover. Indulging his interviewer, he contemplates a life of what might have been, before the million-selling albums, the signature guitar (Washburn's Donegan Maya Pro) and the tours that have taken him around the world.

"There's no way I could have known that I'd be in this position right now," he says. "All the odds were against me. I was a guy like anybody else, just working a regular job, you know? And the thing was, working construction was fine, really. Obviously, I have enormous respect for the people in the industry. But you have to follow your heart, silly as that sounds. The only thing I knew was that I had this incredible belief in myself and that I had to see it through. That's just the way I am about everything: don't do it halfway when you can do it all the way."

Donegan's earnest approach to his instrument extends to how Disturbed, his Chicago-based group, make music. Some bands compose songs on the fly and rely on spur-of-the-moment recordings to capture light in a jar. Disturbed's method is more nose-to-the-grindstone. For days, weeks and months on end, the band hammers out each track, measure for measure, note for note, sanding off extraneous bits and buffing every nuance to a shiny metallic polish. It's mind-numbing work, but Donegan says the group doesn't know any other way. "Anything we've ever done that's been worth a damn has been the result of a hard-won battle. Which is fine by me. I'm all for going to war, as long as there's a reason."

When Donegan says the words "going to war," he's not just tossing off a well-worn line. He knows from where he speaks. For years now, Disturbed have received letters and emails from troops in Iraq telling the band what its music has meant to them. "For some reason, our songs really resonate with the men and women on the battlefield," he says. "I guess there's just a 'gung-ho' aspect to our sound."

A couple of years ago, Disturbed were shocked when a sergeant lieutenant, his wife in tow, came to one of their concerts intent on presenting his bronze star to the band. "There's no way you can prepare yourself for something like that," Donegan says. "Even though we felt we didn't deserve it—we're just a band playing music; we didn't risk our lives like he had—we had to accept it, because it was an honor to do so. He wanted to say thank you to us. But really, we were the ones who were saying thank you. And we do so to this day."

This past March, Disturbed got a chance to say it up close and personal when they appeared alongside such disparate acts as Jessica Simpson, Filter and the Pussycat Dolls as part of the Operation MySpace show that traveled to Kuwait City to perform for the troops. "Let me try to paint this visual for you," Donegan begins. "We hit the stage, the crowd goes wild, and I'm up there playing guitar looking out at all of these servicemen and women. Everybody's holding rifles, but everybody's cheering and laughing and jumping up and down. It was the most amazing thing. Now, you try telling me that music can't lift people, that it can't move mountains, that it doesn't have some sort of seismic force. I'll tell you differently—'cause I've seen it!"

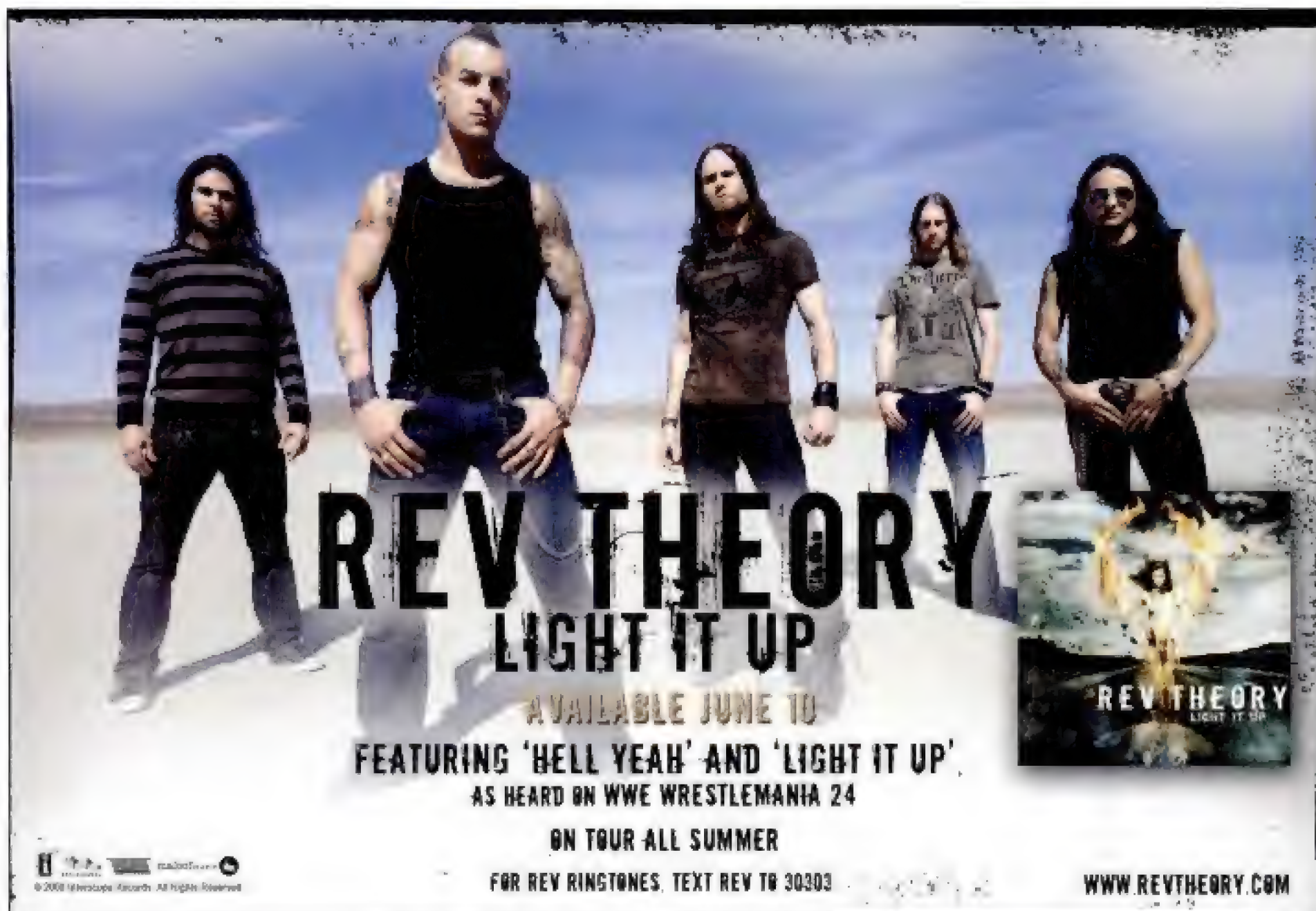
The idea of music's seismic force has long fascinated Donegan. He caught the buzz the moment he picked up the guitar, when he was a teenager living in his hometown of Oak Lawn, Illinois. Even then he knew something magical happened every time he played a power chord. "It's that way you feel the strings vibrating through the guitar and against your stomach," he says. "I don't know how anybody could get tired of that." Later, when he formed Disturbed with drummer Mike Wengren, bassist Steve "Fuzz" Kmak and singer David Draiman (bassist John Moyer has since come on to replace Kmak), he held

long and hard to that sensation as the band slogged through some decidedly un-metal-friendly Chicago clubs. "Making a name for ourselves was pretty tough at first," Donegan admits. "A lot of Chicago clubs at the time catered to rock and alternative bands. Metal was considered kind of uncool. So we just took our music to the kids, to the people. It's what we've always done. Before you knew it, we didn't need anybody else's scene. We had created one of our own."

Disturbed recorded a demo that caught the attention of Giant Records. After signing a deal, they threw down and recorded *The Sickness* with their friend and producer Johnny K. Powered by the hit "Down with the Sickness," the album was a roaring success, eventually selling more than three million copies. Two more Johnny K-produced albums, *Believe* and *Ten*



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Thousand Fists, followed. The Disturbed sound—Donegan's Homeric riffs, Wengren's jackhammer beats and Draiman's animalistic howls—was buried in the thicket of metal fans' senses. The combined sales of all three albums was closing in on 10 million. No one in his right mind would want to mess that up, right?

"I don't know if we messed it up," Donegan says, laughing. "At least I don't think we did." The guitarist is addressing the band members' decision to oust Johnny K from the producer's chair and assume knob-turning duties themselves. "It was just something we all knew we had to do. For our sound to evolve, and for us to grow as a band and see what we were truly capable of, we had to take on the whole nine yards. And that meant making the record our own way."

The aptly titled *Indestructible* (it's named for both the band's inner resolve and as a tribute to the U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan) is Disturbed's angriest, most politically charged and, well, its most disturbing to date. On songs such as "Enough" and the title cut, Draiman paints brutal, vivid landscapes of war and all its horrors. Elsewhere, on the tracks "Deceiver" and "Inside the Fire," the singer dives into his own soul and exorcises the demons that are past girlfriends. "David has a lot on his mind pretty much 24/7," Donegan says. "Which is great, because he's never at a loss for material. No writer's block with that guy."

As for Donegan, he surrounds himself with a fortress of guitars. On past albums, he sometimes appeared to be more of a supporting player, gamely pumping out riffs, squeals and rhythms but shunning the spotlight. "I never lose sight of the fact that the song is the thing," he says. "People buy Disturbed records, not Dan Donegan records." The new album, however, sees the guitarist assuming a starring role—every song features a solo and a significant riff—with spectacular results. And so the former construction worker from Oak Lawn, Illinois, is a guitar hero now. A real one, too, not merely a collection of pixels in a video game. And real guitar heroes have this funny way of being indestructible.

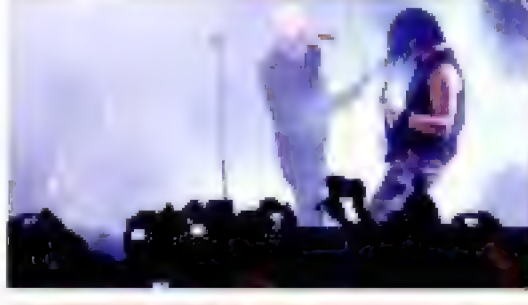
GUITAR WORLD It looks like congratulations are in order. You've gone from being an unknown guitarist in an unknown band to a guitar player in a band that sells CDs. And now you're a bona fide guitar hero on the cover of *Guitar World*. What's next—are you going to Disney World?

DAN DONEGAN [laughs] Yeah, right. I should! You know, I'm still getting used to the fact that my job is to play the guitar, let alone that I'm supposed to be a—you know, "guitar hero." [laughs] I don't have to tell you that most bands, even ones that achieve some success, have very short-lived careers. There's no guarantees anywhere. So to be in a band that has loyal fans, a band that's getting bigger and is still climbing the ladder—there's no way I could describe how amazing it feels. I get letters and emails from kids all over the world telling me how my playing inspires them. That's unbelievable to me.

GW Nowadays, it seems as if there are a lot of metal bands coming from all points across the globe. Disturbed are one of the few big metal groups to hail from America. Numbers-wise, do you feel that the States are not representing?

DONEGAN I think metal bands have always had to break down doors and barriers. I think it's great that there are so many bands coming everywhere and players are getting recognition. As for us being an American band, hey, we're just doing our part. The funny thing is, I never knew where we fit in with any particular genre or anything, and I still don't. [laughs] When we first came out, we were called nu-metal because that's what was happening at the time. Now people say we're not metal enough. Whatever, you know?

GW What was it like producing the new album by yourselves? And in the



**"YOU TRY TELLING ME
THAT MUSIC CAN'T LIFT
PEOPLE. THAT IT CAN'T
MOVE MOUNTAINS. THAT IT
DOESN'T HAVE SOME SORT
OF SEISMIC FORCE.
I'LL TELL YOU
DIFFERENTLY."**

DONEGAN I usually play two rhythm tracks and combine them. I use the same guitar but I put it through two different amps: my Randall 1086 and a Bogner Ecstasy head. That's the bedrock of my sound. I do some layering here and there, and that's when I'll try things through Marshall or Diezel amps. All the toys eventually come out. Whenever I'm tweaking parts, the guys joke around and call it "The Danny Donegan Orchestra," because I act like something of a mad scientist experimenting with different sounds. It's probably boring the rest of the guys to have to sit through all of that, but for hours I'm totally absorbed. Every pedal that I have, every pedal the studio has—I'll just tweak

Donegan and Disturbed at Camp Buehring, in Kuwait, on March 10, 2008, for their Operation MySpace performance

process, what did you learn about the band?

DONEGAN It felt like some added pressure at first. I think the record label was a little nervous. You know: "What are those guys doing? Are they going to mess this thing up?" We were pretty confident though. We had worked with Johnny K on the first three records, and we were very comfortable with him. But that's the thing: we were too comfortable. It was time to shake things up. Funnily enough, we ended up making the record at Johnny's studio, Groovemaster Recording, and we used his engineer, too [Tadpole], so we weren't totally out of our element.

We've always been perfectionists in how we approach the writing and pre-production. We beat the hell out of every song. Did we allow ourselves a bit more room to experiment? Possibly. But we don't go into the studio without a clear picture of what we're going to wind up with.

GW Your drummer, Mike, is a very fluid player. As a guitarist, do you have a particular way of working with him?

DONEGAN It's funny you say that. I've been with Mike the longest of anybody in this band. Musically, we know each other very well. Going into a record, if I have riffs I've been working on, I'll play them for Mike to see what he's going to do with them. It's only when I have a very strong idea of what the drums should do that I'll give him any kind of direction. Most of the time, what he does instinctively is pretty magical.

GW The opening track of the new album, "Indestructible," begins with the sounds of war: bombs, helicopters, machine guns. What kind of statement are you hoping to make?

DONEGAN We've always been very vocal about being pro military but anti war. Nobody wants to send their sons and daughters off to war, especially one that we can't all agree on. But the fact that the troops are there—that they're doing their jobs and they don't question their mission, that they're making such a huge sacrifice for this country—we respect that. Throughout the years, David has always made comments about the war and his support for the troops. He gets the crowd going at shows, shouting "U.S.A.!" Those are very powerful moments.

GW What was it like to perform in Kuwait for the troops?

DONEGAN It was definitely the most memorable moment in our career. It was a little frightening going over there and not knowing what to expect. I remember sitting on the plane and looking at the monitor and seeing that we were flying right over Baghdad. That was a little shocking. I thought, you know, maybe we'd just go around Baghdad. [laughs] But the look on the troops' faces when they saw us, and their appreciation for us being there... It was unbelievable.

GW The "wall of guitar" tone on the album is very consistent. How many guitars do you generally record on any given song?

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everything out till we find the best tones and frequencies that sit in the mix.

GW How much are you using the Washburn Maya on the album?

DONEGAN I don't think I changed it once.

GW I imagine it must be pretty cool to have your own signature model guitar.

DONEGAN The whole thing is pretty mind blowing for me. I remember being a kid playing in a garage band who dreamed about getting onstage. I never, ever thought in a million years that a big company would want to make a guitar for me. That said, when Washburn first approached me, I really wasn't looking to make a switch from what I had been using. But because Washburn is only an hour from where I live, and because they wanted me to be very hands-on with the

design, it led to some great discussions. So I went to see them, I told them about what I thought I was looking for, and they built a prototype that knocked me out. Once I tried the prototype in the studio, that was it. I said, "Let's do this thing."

GW Now, you have your own DigiTech pedal, the Weapon. How much am I hearing that on the album?

DONEGAN It's definitely on a few tracks. There's some overdubs you can hear it on. I actually used that pedal on the *Ten Thousand Fists* record on some drum parts. Mike wanted to create these drum loops, so he ran them through some distortion, and then I put them through the DigiTech pedal.

GW The riff of the song "Inside the Fire" is one of those curlicue patterns that could go any

number of different ways. How many versions of a riff like that will you come up with before you know you've got it?

DONEGAN I beat myself over the head with every riff, probably too much. The guys are always making fun of me 'cause I'm such a perfectionist. But a lot of the time, after Mike has laid down a drum part or David has done his vocals, I'll hear the riff and want to approach it differently. I admit that I get carried away with going back and trying to make improvements. That's just the way I am though.

GW But what is your process for writing riffs? Are you one of those guys who just zones out in front of the TV and jams?

DONEGAN A lot of the time, sure. Being at home is the best thing for my writing. Even if it's, like, four in the morning, I'll just wake up and start noodling around for a couple of hours.

GW The solo in "Inside the Fire" is a pretty big guitar hero statement. At this stage in your career, and because you're receiving such acclaim for your playing, do you feel pressure to deliver such Olympian-type performances?

DONEGAN I don't feel any pressure. I don't really think about it that much. I want the solos to serve a purpose but never as an excuse for me to show off. The majority of the time I try to play something that is influenced by what David is doing vocally or what the backing track is doing for me.

GW I find it hard to pinpoint your guitar influences—which is another way of saying you have a fairly unique style.

DONEGAN I don't think it was ever one main guy. Of course, I was very influenced by classic metal bands: Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Queensrÿche, Metallica, Pantera... They were all powerful to me. I try to pick a little from all of the guitarists in those groups. And over the years, I've learned a lot from so many people. But there wasn't really one player who made me pick up the guitar; it was more like everybody did.

GW You're all over the whammy bar on "The Curse." I don't hear too much whammy action on the rest of the album.

DONEGAN Something about that song and the riff just made me want to go for it. Having more solos on this record than on anything else we've done, I guess I had a few tricks up my sleeve. Some songs had a little finger tapping, others had cool arpeggios. "The Curse" just kind of screamed out "whammy bar!" There have been players over the years—Dimebag and Randy Rhoads—who did amazing things with whammy bars, so maybe I just thought of them while I was playing.

GW As a player, do you ever feel restricted with your role in Disturbed and the music the band makes? Might you ever do a solo guitar record?

DONEGAN I don't know. I don't know where I would have the time to do that. I have my plate pretty full with Disturbed business. You know, we've worked so hard and been so dedicated to our fans—I wouldn't want to deny them anything the band has to offer. Plus, I don't know if I would feel right being away from the other guys. It feels...I don't know...like cheating on your wife or something. [laughs] I'm not saying the grass couldn't be greener on the other side, but you know...why chance it? ♦



TIRED OF AMP HUM & BUZZ AT THE GIG??



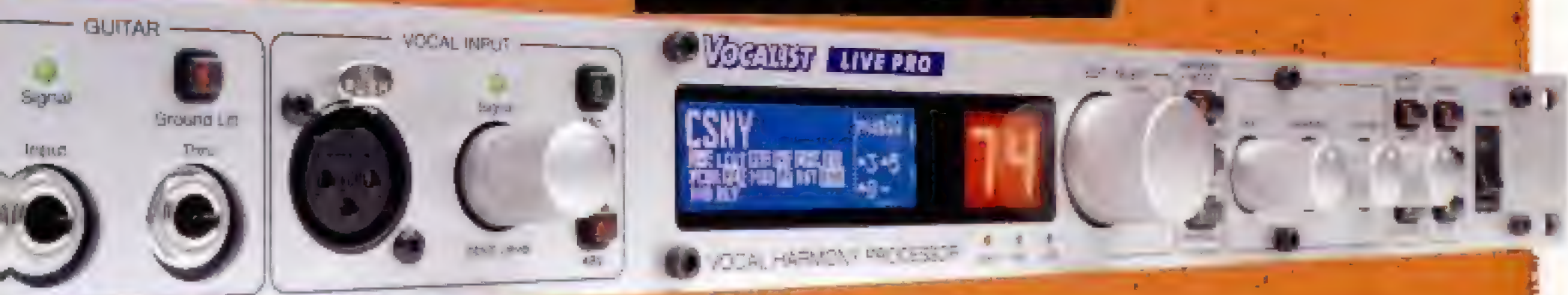
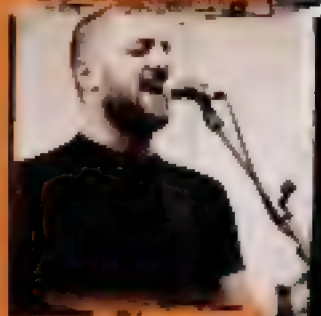
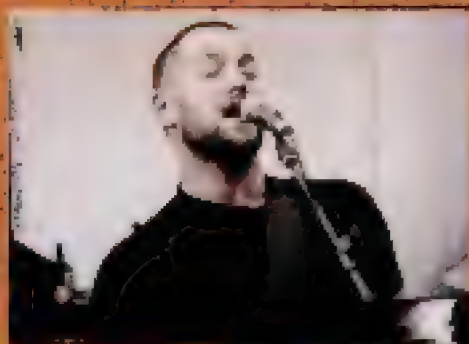
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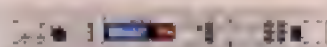
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RHOADS STORIES

Since Randy Rhoads' death in 1982, his guitars and amps have sat untouched and unseen. Now, *Guitar World* presents an exclusive look at his gear—from his first guitar to his last amp—and the tales they tell about his brief but blazing time on Earth. **BY ALAN DI PERNA**

Photographs by Travis Shinn



MUSONIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC IS a world unto itself. Housed in a trim little Cape Cod cottage, it's an oddly incongruent sight amid the squalid strip malls and decaying apartment complexes of Los Angeles' northern San Fernando Valley. At night, local gangbangers cruise the main drag just yards away from the building. Inside Musonia, however, a mood of quiet, tidy order prevails, for Musonia is the music school owned and operated by Delores Rhoads, mother of the late metal guitar legend Randy Rhoads.

Randy Rhoads, of course, is one of the big faces up there on the Mount Rushmore of metal guitar. His early Eighties work with Ozzy Osbourne is essential listening for all aspiring shredders; his early death, in 1982, has canonized him as metal's pale white saint, an anomaly in a genre best known for demonic bad boys dressed in black.

ON DISC

SEE ZAKK WYLDE DEMO THE NEW MARSHALL 1959 RANDY RHOADS SIGNATURE HEAD & CABINET

Kelle, Delores and Kathy Rhoads

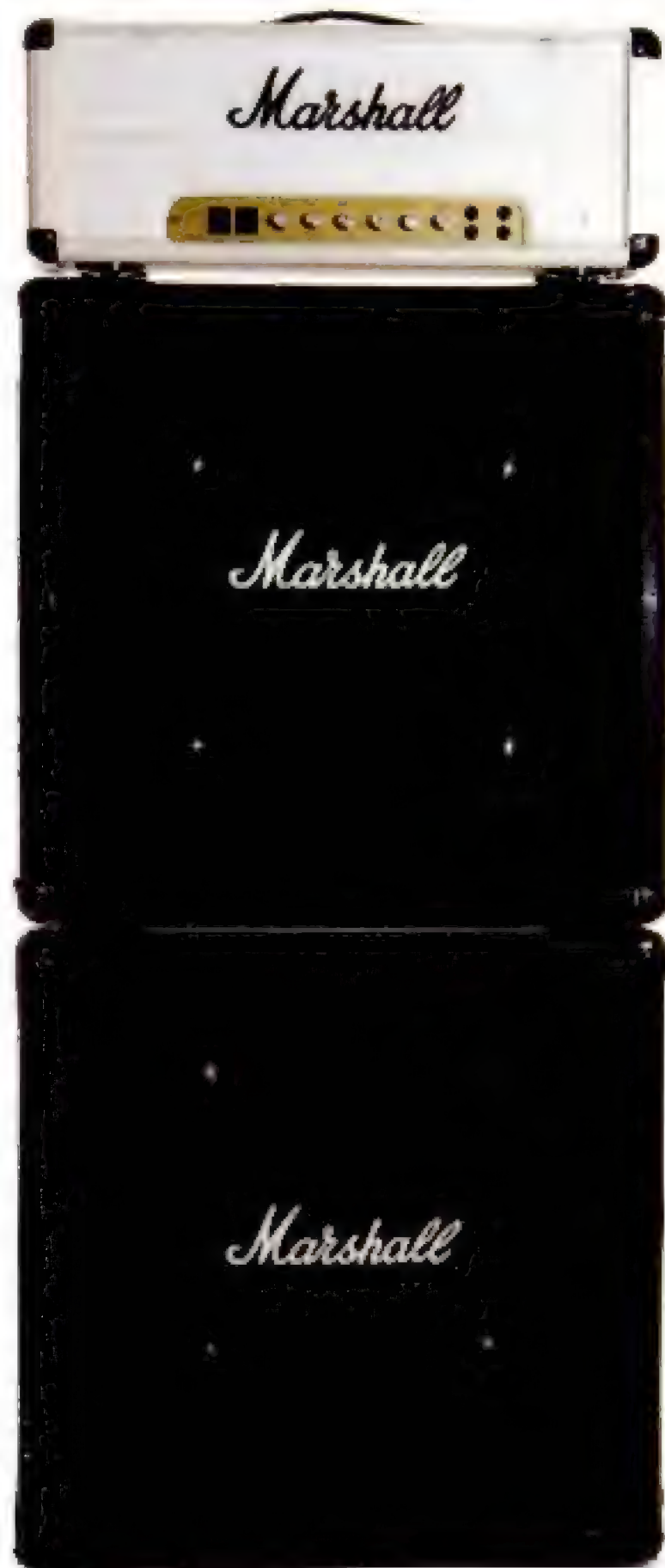


Packing slip on Randy's gear,
signed by Ozzy Osbourne

Hold for Pick-up
By S.I.R.
To: Barry Rothman
9200 Sunset Blvd.
L.A. CA. 90069
From: Ozzy Osbourne



Randy's Super Lead head; (below) with its two matching 4x12 cabinets. The front edges of the cabinets were covered with black tape to make them inconspicuous onstage.



And yet, the baddest of the bad revere Randy. It was none other than Zakk Wylde, heir to the Ozzy lead guitar throne, who insisted that Marshall create the new 1959RR Randy Rhoads model head and cabinet, one of many posthumous honors and tributes that Randy has received over the years.

Randy bridged the gap between proto-metal riffing (Page, Hendrix, Leslie West, etc.) and the full-blown shredding that got started in the late Eighties. He did so by introducing the discipline of classical musicianship into rock's dysfunctional gene pool, adding dazzlingly executed arpeggios and modal harmonic sensibilities to the rock guitarist's bag of tricks. That classical discipline is something that Randy acquired while he was growing up in the halls and chambers of Musonia.

The building has changed very little since Mrs. Rhoads built it in 1948. It looks exactly as it did in Randy's day. Inside, not a computer, iPod or television is in sight. Mrs. Rhoads was only recently persuaded to give up her old-fashioned rotary-dial telephone in favor of something a little more modern. The interior of the building is furnished in the colonial style that was popular with middle-class homeowners in the mid 20th century. Print portraits of the great classical composers—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms—hang on wood-paneled walls. The building is modeled after a house that Mrs. Rhoads and her ex-husband, Randy's dad, had owned previously.

"We loved that house so much," says Delores, who is now 88 years of age, but still teaches at the school every day. "So we chose the same colors, the same wood, everything."

Randy's dad William was musical too, a clarinetist and music teacher. But he and Delores split up when Randy was just 17 months old. Mrs. Rhoads never remarried. She originally launched Musonia in conjunction with two business partners but now is the sole proprietor. Coming out of an era when women in business and single moms were the exception rather than the rule, she has maintained a successful establishment that still instructs some 80 students on a regular basis. These days, Mrs. Rhoads has some difficulty walking but nonetheless exudes a sense of quiet determination and purpose. A small-jeweled crucifix suspended from a chain at her neck suggests one source of her strength.

The homey, anachronistic rooms of Musonia are where Randy Rhoads received his early musical educa-

tion and where he spent some of the happiest days of his short life. Randy taught guitar at Musonia during his teens and early twenties. At the height of his tutorial career he had more than 50 students a week in his charge. It was from this studious background that he went on to rock and revolutionize the world of metal as lead guitarist for Ozzy Osbourne.

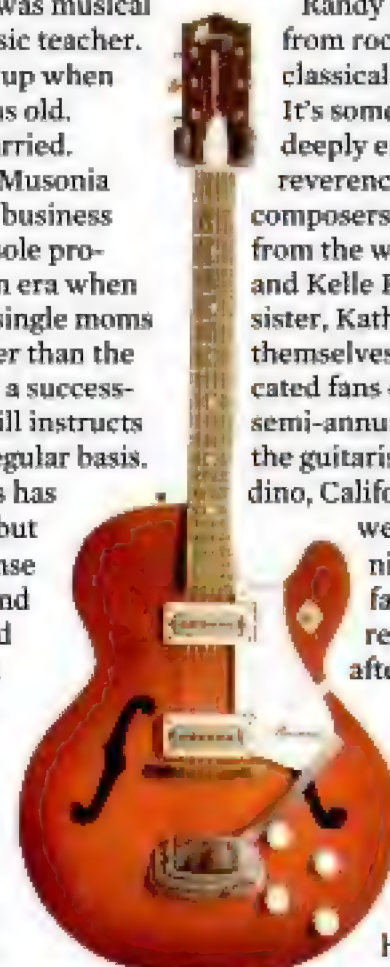
Since the guitarist's passing in 1982, Musonia has become a place of pilgrimage for the small but intensely devoted cult of Randy fans. Kelle Rhoads, Randy's elder brother by four and half years, tells how Japanese admirers will sit and meditate for hours in the tiny 10-by-10 room where Randy taught, lighting candles as if at a Buddhist shrine or a site of miraculous appearances by the Blessed Virgin Mary. For Kelle himself, every plank, instrument, chair and table inside Musonia is charged with memories of his late brother.

"Whether your readers believe this or not, I miss Randy every single day," he says. "At times I feel him with me, and at times I don't. But I always think about him and always with really good thoughts."

A rock and roller himself, Kelle played with Randy in a teenage cover band called Violet Fox before he moved on to sing with a number of L.A.-based hard rock outfits. But more recently he has turned to composing music for the pianoforte, writing and performing in the 19th century Romantic and Impressionist styles of composers like Liszt, Schumann and Debussy. "I compose music that went out of style 130 years ago," he jokes. "But I never made all that much money doing rock anyway."

Randy himself was moving away from rock and in the direction of classical music at the end of his life. It's something that Mrs. Rhoads deeply engrained in both her sons, a reverence for those august classical composers staring imposingly down from the walls of Musonia. Delores and Kelle Rhoads, along with Randy's sister, Kathy, have generously made themselves available to Randy's dedicated fans over the years, appearing at semi-annual memorial gatherings at the guitarist's gravesite in San Bernardino, California, answering mail and welcoming visitors to Musonia. Not surprisingly, many fans want to know how Delores is faring so many years after Randy's death.

"I tell the fans that I'm still in shock," she says. "Amazingly, Randy still has a mission. Even though he's not here, the Good Lord has placed him in a situation where he is able to encourage



Randy's first electric guitar, a Harmony Rocket thinline hollowbody

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Back side of Marshall cabinet



Delores Rhoads with Randy's Jackson

young people. We get so many letters from people saying how much Randy inspired them. They say that over and over."

Guitar-playing Randy devotees, and fans of great tone in general, will have a chance to feel even closer to the departed legend with the release of the new Marshall Randy Rhoads signature model amp. It's an exact replica of the 100-watt Model 1959 Marshall Super Lead head and stack, done in custom white Tolex, that Randy played with Ozzy during the final years of his life. The original amp now belongs to the Rhoads family, which has retained possession of all the late guitarist's instruments, music gear and other personal belongings.

The family recently invited *Guitar World* to Musonia to check out Randy's original Marshall and other choice pieces of his gear, several of which haven't been taken out of their cases since the guitarist died, in 1982. (The equipment is usually kept at an undisclosed location but was briefly moved to the school for our visit.) The first piece to emerge from decades of dusty confinement is Randy's very first guitar ever: an ancient Gibson Army & Navy flattop acoustic, style "GY." Even with its strings currently missing, this is a highly collectible instrument, owing not only to its close association with Randy Rhoads but also to the fact that it was Gibson's first flattop. (Produced from the end of World War I until 1921, the GY predated Gibson's L-1 flattop by nearly 10 years.) The instrument originally belonged Randy's maternal grandfather, Dr. Fred Kell, a surgeon who played music as a way to unwind at the end of the day.

Affixed to the inside surface of the guitar's back, visible through the sound hole, is a circular sticker that reads "Gibson Mandolin Guitar Company, Kalamazoo USA." Originally sold as a budget guitar, the instrument boasts a



I think
Randy
affected
people so
deeply
because
he was so
sincere
about
everything
he did.
—Delores
Rhoads

simple trapeze tailpiece. Beneath the bridge there is a strip of cardboard that Randy added to raise the guitar's action. But that was only after he'd been playing the thing for a while. The instrument first roused his curiosity when he was still a toddler.

"Randy actually found it somewhere around the house," Kelle recalls. "He laid it flat on the floor and started to strum the strings. His hands wouldn't have been big enough to go completely around the fretboard at that point."

By the time he'd entered his sixth year, Randy began to take guitar lessons on the ancient Gibson. Along with his sister Kathy, one year his elder, Randy received instruction from Bonnie Chaikand, a teacher at Musonia. "They both started on what was called 'folk' guitar," Delores recalls. "They learned chords and they would apply them to songs of the day that they liked—not difficult at all."

Kathy Rhoads remembers assaying the Sixties rock classic "Louie Louie" with her brother in those early days. Being closer in age to Randy than Kelle, she enjoyed a particularly close sibling relationship with the future rock star. "When Randy and Kathy were kids, people thought they were twins," Kelle remembers. "There was a strong physical resemblance."

"We played a lot together," Kathy adds, "and we had lots of the same friends on the block." Both siblings attended St. Michael's Lutheran, a small private school in Burbank. With just 10 or 12 students in each grade level, the school combined grades to fill its classrooms. "Every other year, you were in a combined class," Kathy explains. "So, being only a year apart, Randy and I were in the same classroom for the first and second grade—he was in first and I was in second. And every other year it was like that."

Kathy soon lost interest in guitar, but Randy had found his life's calling in the

Detail of Gibson Army & Navy flattop acoustic



Randy's last set list



His Fifties Fender Harvard Combo amp, which Randy stripped of its tweed covering and refinished.



By the end of the Seventies, the band's career was stagnant, but Randy was comfortable nonetheless. Being a hometown hero was enough for him. He was teaching at Musonia, attend-

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ing band practice and playing gigs in the evenings with Quiet Riot and spending time with Jodi Raskin, one of two women with whom Randy Rhoads is known to have had a romantic relationship.

So when he received an offer to audition for Ozzy Osbourne's band, Randy initially wasn't at all interested. "My brother was not a big Black Sabbath fan," says Kelle. "I was. But not him." In the end, it was Mom who convinced him to head over to Le Parc hotel in West Hollywood to try out for the position.

"I told Randy, 'In music, sometimes it's who you know rather than what you know,'" Delores recalls. "So you should go down and meet these people, even if you don't want to go with this band.' And that's what happened. Randy refused to go until he'd finished teaching his lessons for the day, which usually went until around 10 o'clock in the evening. So it was late before he was able to get there. And he wasn't gone long at all. I of course was still up when he came home. I said, 'What happened?' He said, 'Well, I was warming up a bit, tuning up my guitar, and Ozzy came out and said I had the job. But I don't know what job I got. Probably nothing will come of it. They won't call back.' But they did call back, in exactly two weeks, just as Ozzy had promised Randy."

And so Randy Rhoads, who'd never left home before, was whisked off to England with one of rock's premier nut cases, along with his manager—and soon to be wife—Sharon Osbourne, plus the rhythm section of Lee Ker-slake and Bob Daisley, two grizzled British rock vets. Together they launched Ozzy's post-Sabbath career and made metal history with 1980's *Blizzard of Ozz* album and tour.

Randy Rhoads was now a hot new, high-profile rock guitarist. As such, he could play any gear he wanted. He got together with luthier Grover Jackson to create the now legendary asymmetrical Flying V-shaped Concorde guitar, also known as the Randy Rhoads signature model. And it was with Ozzy that Randy played Marshall amps for the first time. In Quiet Riot he'd used a Peavey Standard solid-state head with two Altec-loaded Ampeg cabs. As the guitarist for Osbourne, however, Randy found it was time to move up to the metal standard.

He played rented Marshalls at first, but in January 1980, Randy went down to Marshall HQ and ordered up a custom rig, with a hot-rodged front end and white Tolex covering. White had been his trademark color ever since he saw Mick Ronson and his white Les Paul with Bowie all those years ago.

Today, those very same amps are in the proud custody of the Rhoads family. On the day of my visit, the amp's

GHOST IN THE MACHINE?

BERNIE TORME recalls Randy Rhoads' haunted pedal board and wonders if the departed guitarist was pushing his buttons. BY ALAN DI PERNA

THE FIRST GUITARIST to replace Randy Rhoads in Ozzy Osbourne's band was Irish-born, London-based session Bernie Torme, who had been playing guitar for original Deep Purple vocalist Ian Gillan and had just finished his first solo album when the call came in from the States.

"Randy died on a Saturday, and I was called on the Tuesday morning after that," Torme recalls. "My immediate reaction was to lay it, because my album was coming out in a month and I had a tour booked. But they basically asked repeatedly, and I wanted to help out. I was able to postpone a few dates on my tour, so I said, 'Okay, I'll come.'"

Of all the metal guitarists kicking around in 1982, how did Torme get chosen? "I had been on *All Records*"—the label to which Osbourne was signed—"and had briefly seen Ozzy a couple of times in the office a few years earlier," Torme explains. "Although I was completely unknown in the U.S., I had a reputation in Europe at that time as a name guitarist who was quite showy onstage and who sort of played in the same stylistic area that Randy did. A lot of people had told me, 'Ozzy's new guitarist is amazing,' but I hadn't heard Randy at all. Just before I flew out, I was given both albums, *Wizard of Oz* and *Blizzard of Ozz*. I put them on, and I was absolutely blown away. I was thinking, Oh my God, I can't do this."

Right from the start, the whole thing was a little unnerving for Torme, who hadn't realized that Ozzy was playing big venues in the U.S. "I was expecting just to play venues of 1,000 or 2,000 people," he says. "And also I was expecting



Torme in a recent live performance

the music to be basically like Sabbath had been."

Torme nonetheless soon found himself in L.A., where he passed an audition with Ozzy keyboardist Don Airey. From there it was on to a string of East Coast gigs. To Torme, those seemed doomed from the start. "The record company had shipped all my gear to the States," he explains, "but it had gone to L.A. Meanwhile I was on the East Coast. The first gig was in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and I hadn't any gear at all, except for the two guitars I had with me. I had no pedals, no amp tops...nothing. They were trying to get my pedals and amps to me in time for the gig, but they never arrived. So I ended up using Randy's pedals."

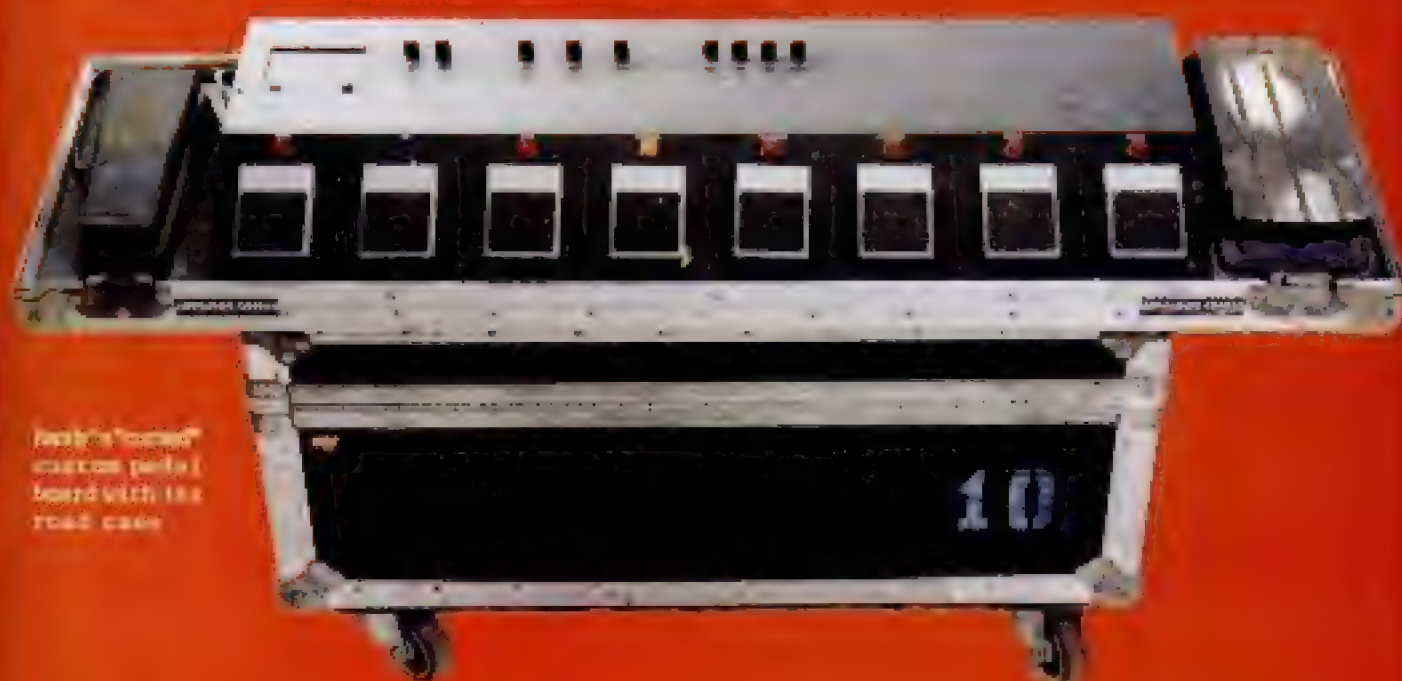
"It was a sore subject,

because I wasn't keen to use his pedals. It seemed awfully disrespectful. I know it caused everyone else in that band a bit of a problem, too. It was not the thing I wanted to do at that stage."

The pedal board itself was notoriously finicky and was known to have caused Rhoads some problems. But when the thing started acting up on Torme, he immediately feared that some kind of supernatural retribution was being enacted.

"I'm onstage, and the pedals are turning off and on by themselves. I'm thinking, Oh my God, what is going on? This is not good. Remember that, by this point, I'd come across from England and I hadn't slept probably for three days. I was jet lagged and freaked out, totally panicked in terms of trying to remember the arrangements and chord progressions and what song was happening next. It was a full-on show. Basically, the whole time I

THE PEDALS STARTED TURNING ON AND OFF BY THEMSELVES. IT WAS LIKE, 'OH NO, THIS ISN'T RIGHT. RANDY DOESN'T WANT ME HERE.'



Torme's "crazy" custom pedal board with 10 pedals

STYLING: TIMOTHY HARRIS; GUITAR: JEFFREY M. SHERMAN; PHOTOGRAPHY: CARLOS V. FLORES

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bulky road cases—still labeled “Ozzy Osbourne”—are blocking up the hallway at Musonia. Randy played a six-cabinet setup: three slant fronts atop three straight fronts. The faceplate of the head, which bears the serial number 10328L, has scratch marks where Randy’s guitar tech Pete Mertens etched the guitarist’s preferred settings into the metal. The head and cabs all bear a scuffed up appearance and funky aroma of genuine road gear. While they were originally all white, the front Tolex edges of the head and cabinets were masked out in black tape to make them blend in with the medieval castle stage set that Ozzy used on the *Diary of a Madman* Tour—a set that Randy is known to have hated, incidentally, as it made it difficult for him to hear his guitar onstage.

Kelle Rhoads has an intuitive sense that Randy, in some realm beyond our own, is pleased that his amp rig is back in action: “I am convinced that Randy was really happy the day the guy from Marshall visited us and we uncorked that amp and cabinets, because they kind of got liberated after 25 years. And I think it was a special thing for Randy to see those things come out of their cases and be brought back to life again. I could just feel it—that Randy was hanging out and he was smiling as those things got taken out of the boxes.”

Another key element in Randy’s rig during his final days was a custom pedal board. It’s an efficient-looking unit bracketed with a Cry Baby wah on the left and a Roland expression pedal on the right. Nobody’s quite sure what’s under the hood.

“That pedal board has a curse on it,” Kelle maintains. (See sidebar, page 78.) “The first one who experienced the curse was Randy. He worried about it constantly. I remember the first time he came back to L.A. to play a show with Ozzy at the Long Beach Arena. It was a hot day in June 1981 and Randy was returning to his hometown as a conquering hero, the local guy who made good. But on the way down in the limo, all Randy could talk about was that pedal board. Throughout the whole trip he was going, ‘Oh man, this isn’t gonna work. Oh man...’ Randy and my sister are the two great worriers of my family. They achieved a level of being able to worry in life that’s truly amazing. So this board was Randy’s nemesis. But for the show, it worked like a charm. The whole set was a huge triumph. At the end of it, I remember Tommy Lee from Mötley Crüe picking up my mom and dancing with her, and they were both crying.”

It’s no secret that Randy Rhoads wasn’t an entirely happy camper at the end of his tenure with Ozzy. Life on the road with heavy metal’s original Prince of Darkness was a little too

much for a nice Lutheran boy from Burbank who’d never been away from home on his own before.

“You know, Ozzy drank too much and was using drugs and so forth,” Delores says. “And Randy didn’t like any part of that. One thing that bothered Randy so much was they would call for a rehearsal and Ozzy wasn’t available. ‘Where’s Ozzy?’ Well, he was...out. That would bother Randy because all he wanted to do was the music. That was his focus: to go forward with the music. But I guess missed rehearsals happened regularly at that time. Back then, Ozzy was doing and saying a lot of things that I’m sure he regrets today. All that was foreign to Randy because we’d been really protective of him with our church and school. Randy was a homebody. He liked to be at home, and that was his first experience being in a completely different environment with completely strange people. And he got homesick—he would call us a lot. It was okay as long as he was playing, even on tour. But if he had a day off, it would not be a good day. He’d want to go home.”

Randy had begun to study classical guitar in England. He had plans to quit rock to study music at UCLA, his mom and dad’s alma mater. In the end he wanted to join the immortals on the walls of Musonia.

“We had just started to inquire about that,” Delores says. Randy wanted to get his bachelors degree at UCLA, and he wanted to go for his masters degree in Europe, because he said the teachers there were really a little superior. He was looking forward to doing that.”

Instead, Randy Rhoads joined the faculty of angels. A plane crash claimed his life on March 19, 1982, leaving a great gap in the lives of his family, friends and fans that has never quite been filled. Visiting Musonia, one feels that the clock stopped the day Randy died. That is why the place is so oddly anachronistic. Delores Rhoads isn’t just being dramatic or serving up a printable quote when she says she’s still in shock. But this is also why the legions of devoted fans and memorial gatherings are so important to the Rhoads family. Far from being a nuisance, the fans help fill the gap that Randy left when he died.

“I think Randy affected people so deeply because he was so sincere about everything he did,” she says. “It affected people who saw him in concert when it was possible to do so. He had a charisma about him and it transfers through his music. And now we have a lot of very young people who are fans, who did not get the opportunity to see Randy play live. But I believe that the music still transfers that same inspiration to them.”



was shifting myself. So when the pedals started turning on and off by themselves, it was like, Oh no, this isn’t right—Randy doesn’t want me here. But, having said that, the pedals all went on and off at appropriate times. So if it was haunted, maybe he was helping me. I definitely needed help.”

Torme stuck it out for five or so more East Coast dates. He doesn’t recall the exact number. “I remember staying at hotels in rooms booked under Randy’s pseudonym, which was ‘Roy Rogers’ on that tour,” he says. “That was pretty weird, too.” The big date on that leg of the tour was New York’s Madison Square Garden. By this point, Ozzy’s faux castle stage set had begun to seem like a dungeon of doom for Torme.

“I remember being behind the castle portcullis at the beginning of the show, as the intro tape rolled, and watching Sharon [Osbourne] being carried off unconscious, with blood pouring from her throat. A firework thrown by the audience had bounced under the curtain and up to her throat, exploding just as she was working off, having without Ozzy good luck for the show. Ozzy didn’t know about it until after the show. And I spent the whole show wondering whether she was alive or dead. Very stressful.”

Finally, says Torme, “I reached a point where I thought, I have my own tour waiting in Europe, and I can’t keep putting people off. I was officially asked to do this Ozzy thing temporarily, and temporarily is all I can do it for. I had a chat with Sharon and Ozzy, and they were completely understanding of my position. They said, ‘Please stay until we find a replacement.’ I said ‘Yeah, of course.’”

“At that point, someone said that Brad Gillis had actually been sent out by—I think it was Epic Records in L.A. He was traveling on the crew bus because nobody in the band seemed to want to try him out. So I went to Don Airey, who had tried me out initially, and asked him about trying out Brad. He said, ‘Yeah, okay.’ So they auditioned Brad, and everyone was happy he was able to play. But they were slightly apprehensive about whether he had the onstage experience to be able to carry it off. They had him play a show with them somewhere in upstate New York. I was in the audience. And Brad was great. So I went to Ozzy the day afterward, and he said, ‘Yeah, cool.’ And I went home and did my own tour.”

These days, Torme is still storming Europe with the hard rock trio GNT. Their debut album, *Bitter and Twisted*, came out in 2006, and they have a new one on the way. But looking back on his brief tenure with Ozzy, the guitarist is neither bitter nor twisted.

“People have asked if I regretted choosing to leave Ozzy, and I don’t. I would have liked to have stayed and played with that band, because it was a great band. But I don’t think the circumstances were right, replacing Randy and all. ‘Cause it was just so tragic. At the time he died, Randy had not really been with Ozzy long enough to have attained the totally deserved iconic status that he now has. I learned so much from trying to play his parts, and I’m thankful for that.”

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Owens is rehearsing at
Frank Zappa's famed
recording studio, the Utility
Muffin Research Kitchen

TOTALLY FRANK

WHEN IT COMES TO FAITHFULLY RECREATING **FRANK ZAPPA'S** MUSIC AND TONES, HIS SON **DWEEZIL** HEADS TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCE: DAD'S COLLECTION OF EXTREMELY RARE GEAR.

BY ALAN DI PERNA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRAVIS SHINN

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, Dweezil Zappa has spent the majority of his waking hours learning, studying, analyzing, rehearsing and performing the music of his father, the late Frank Zappa. It's an arduous task, and Dweezil is quite good at it. So are all six members of Zappa Plays Zappa, the band that Dweezil put together with the goal of reproducing Frank's music as accurately, faithfully and lovingly as possible for the delight and edification of live audiences. When Dweezil hits that stage every night and straps on his guitar, he's as prepared as any human can be.

"But even so," he says, "plenty of times I go onstage and feel like I have no idea how to play the song. We could have played it a thousand times before, but it's hard to keep all that stuff in your brain. You can rely on muscle memory—that works, up to a point. Your hand starts going to a place

on the fretboard and you think, Oh yeah, that's what I'm supposed to play. But in many cases, I can't think fast enough.

"It feels weird to be so on the edge that I could bail out at any moment because I have no idea how I'm doing it or even why I'm doing it."

Obviously, it's not easy to be the son of a genius. Frank Zappa created more than 60 albums during his 52 years on this earth, all of it harmonically dense, obsessively detailed music written in a variety of asymmetrical time signatures. Even his more "accessible" numbers, like "Dinah-Moe-Humm," "Montana" and "I Am the Slime," are daunting to perform, no matter how many music lessons you've had.

In keeping his father's music alive, Dweezil has had to become a bit of an archivist, musicologist and conductor. He's developed a great ear for unraveling gnarly passages of Zappa



music, and he's evolved into a sweep-picking monster of a guitarist, able to whip out some of his dad's wickedest licks, as well as play stuff that Frank wrote for other instruments and never intended to be performed on guitar.

Dweezil's HQ is the same as his dad's: the Utility Muffin Research Kitchen (UMRK), a recording studio Frank built into the ground level of his house in Laurel Canyon, L.A.'s storied rock star enclave. The place looks much the same as it did in Frank's day: a vast wood-paneled recording room, a spacious control room and glassed-off vocal booth half sunk beneath the main studio's floor level. The studio gear has been upgraded since Frank's passing, but the place is still something of a *de*

facto Frank Zappa museum.

In one dark corner of the studio are two guitar racks loaded with Frank's old guitars, each one an object of veneration for rabid Zappa-philes. Sweet Jeezus! There's the Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster that Frank played on *Freak Out!*, his revolutionary 1966 debut album (the a legendary ax is depicted on the original album's inner sleeve). There's the Les Paul seen on the cover of *Shut Up 'n Play Yer Guitar*. And over there—Holy Mother of Rock and Roll! It's the Stratocaster that Jimi Hendrix burned at the Miami Pop Festival back in 1968. Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention were on the bill with Jimi, and the charred remains of his ax were passed on



to Frank, who later resurrected the Strat as a working guitar.

Many would argue that these guitars should be hanging on the walls of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame or some other worthy rock museum, but not Dweezil. Like his father, he has little use for sentiment, sanctimony or the nurturing of hallowed institutions. For him, these guitars are musical instruments—working tools. Why hang them on a wall somewhere for tourists to gawk at when he might need them to bring one of Frank's compositions to life?

As a case in point: when *Guitar World* recently visited UMRK, Dweezil was hunkered down with guitar systems designers Thomas Nordegg and Eddie Clothier, working the kinks out of a mammoth guitar rig that integrates choice pieces of Frank's gear with the finest and very latest in current guitar technology (see sidebar, below). Dweezil is

FQs he had built into his guitar and those transducer-style microphone pickups."

One of Dweezil's key instruments is a stunning replica of a Sixties SG Standard, built for him by Gibson and lovingly antiqued to look like a true relic. "A lot of people mistakenly think it's one of Frank's SGs," he says. "But it isn't. I don't bring any of Frank's guitars on the road. That would hardly be practical."

For this year's round of ZPZ touring, Dweezil has added a thinline hollowbody Hagstrom Viking to his arsenal. Frank played Hagstroms in the Sixties and even did a few ads endorsing the Swedish brand. Dweezil will appear in a new Hagstrom print ad that exactly duplicates one that his dad did way back when. "The tonal character of that guitar is really interesting and different from anything else that I have," Dweezil notes. "But I can get some of the sound Frank was getting in the early days when he was using his [hollowbody electric] Gibson Switchmaster."

Lastly, books have neither strings nor frets, but Dweezil says he never would have gotten good enough to play Frank's music without *Sheets of Sound for Guitar* by Jack A. Zucker and *An Improviser's OS* by Wayne Krantz.

—Alan di Perna



Axes of Dweezil

THE SECRET WEAPONS BEHIND HIS KILLER TONES

ONSTAGE WITH ZAPPA Plays Zappa, Dweezil Zappa plays Fender Eric Johnson signature model Stratocasters, which he pronounces "great and well balanced, probably the best-sounding Strat I've ever heard." On the *Zappa Plays Zappa* DVD, Dweezil can be seen playing an Eric Johnson Strat retrofitted with a lefty Warmoth neck. "I just thought it would be fun to make that guitar a pseudo-white Hendrix Strat," he says. "I like that look."

Another of Dweezil's El Strats is outfitted with a bridge-mounted piezo pickup, which helps him achieve some characteristic Frank Zappa guitar tones. "Around the time of *Shut Up 'n Play Yer Guitar*, Frank had a Barcus Berry [acoustic guitar] pickup on that Hendrix Strat [see main story]. And that was a precursor to his putting piezos on some of his Strats. So all that super-clean stuff you hear on some of his recordings is a combination of the specialized

Dweezil is very hands-on in all aspects of Zappa Plays Zappa.

He also played a key role in the mixing and picture editing of the group's self-titled debut release, a masterful two-DVD/single-CD set that documents ZPZ's inaugural tour in 2006. That was the tour on which Dweezil and his band shared the stage with Frank Zappa alumni Steve Vai, Terry Bozzio and vocalist/saxman Napoleon Murphy Brock. It's the next best thing to being at a Zappa Plays Zappa show, and it may be even better, since the camera takes you behind the instruments and lets you peer over each player's shoulder as he or she executes dexterous maneuvers that are surely against the law in certain Bible Belt states.

Being deeply involved in all aspects of Zappa Plays Zappa, Dweezil finds himself maintaining the same punishing work schedule that his dad did. "I know from growing up with Frank that he was constantly working, 17 to 20 hours a day, every day. No matter where he was, he was always working on something. That amount of creativity is just insane. So to find a balance to get that stuff done—to get the ideas out of your head and record them not just well but extremely well—that's an amazing accomplishment."

♦♦♦♦♦

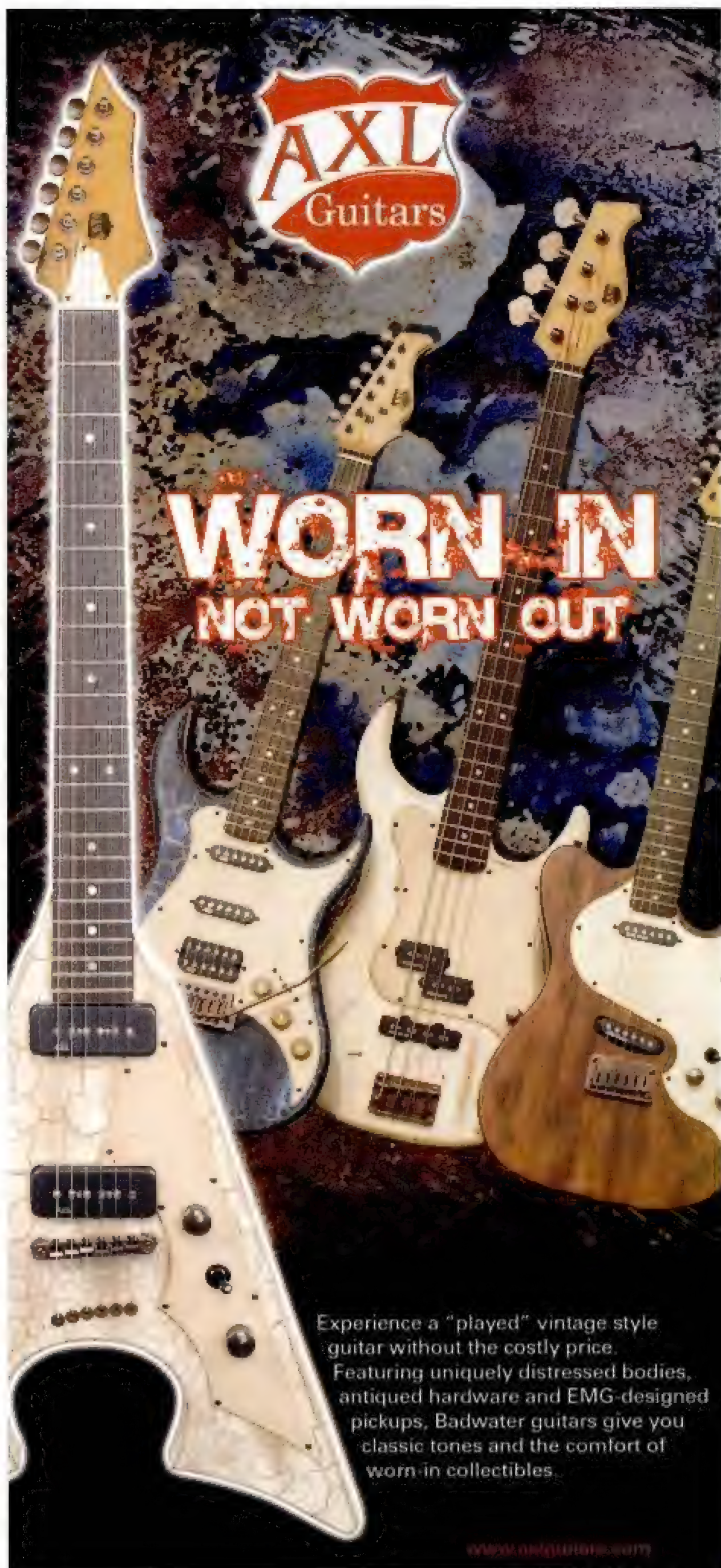
GUITAR WORLD What have the past few years of touring with Zappa Plays Zappa taught you about Frank's music that you didn't know when you started out?

DWEEZIL ZAPPA I discovered what a brilliant arranger he was. The music is meticulous on every level. Even when I think, Oh this song is going to be a little easier, it never is. For guitarists, in particular, it's hard. Typically, I would memorize music in a pattern-based way, but you can't really do that with Frank's music because there are no patterns in it. You have to know why each note is where it is, because the harmony and the chord progression at that particular point might last for only a couple of beats, and the note works for a specific reason. So in addition to working on my technique, I had to do a lot of music training and study a lot of theory that I didn't have in my background.

Also, I still don't read music very well, but it's my goal to, because everybody else in the band reads very well. I learn all my parts by ear.

GW When you prepare music for the stage, do you mainly work from Frank's live recordings? Did he arrange music differently for the stage and the studio?

ZAPPA He definitely did, and sometimes we'll try to recreate something from a live recording of his. But other times we may want to play the well-known album version of a song. Either way, we'll try to dissect the original and get all the parts and sounds as exact to the era as possible. We treat Frank's music the same as any other composer—Mozart, Beethoven or whoever. Orchestras that play that music don't rearrange it, put in new notes and say "I'm gonna do it my way." When people do that with Frank's music, it's actually quite annoying to me. I figure that a lot of people who come to the shows have never heard a lot of this material before. And so the first impression should be as close to the original as possible, because oftentimes first



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◆ A 100-watt Andy Fuchs Plush line amp and cabinet with an Acoustic 270 solid-state bass amp in between



◆ A rack with Frank's two Mic Mix DynaFlangers (at bottom) and Frank's Mu-Tron Bi-Phase pedal



◆ A few of Andy Fuchs' Plush effect pedals share space with a B.K. Butler Real Tube Overdrive and Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2.



Dweezil uses Red Bear Trading Company handmade guitar picks



"A LOT OF PEOPLE AREN'T USED TO THIS MUCH CONCENTRATION. IT REALLY DRIVES SOME PEOPLE NUTS."

impressions are the most important thing.

When I was 12 and I heard Van Halen play "You Really Got Me," I didn't realize that they were covering a Kinks song. So when I heard the Kinks version later on I thought, Man, these guys suck. They can't play that Van Halen song for shit. So if you don't know where something's coming from, you get used to the wrong version and can be confused later on. That's why I want Frank's music to be performed as close to the original version as possible—because the music speaks for itself. That's the true voice here. It's not about me. It's not about anybody in the band.

GW And just as many of today's baroque and early music groups use period instruments to make the music sound as close as possible to how it would have sounded in Vivaldi or Bach's time, you're doing the same with your instrumentation.

ZAPPA Definitely. The instrumentation and sonic character of the original record is every bit as important as the song itself. What it's made out of is completely part of the picture.

GW To that end, you've begun incorporating Frank's guitar gear into your rig. What do you have in there that Frank used to own and play?

ZAPPA There are two Mic Mix DynaFlangers, which is the flange sound he got all over *Joe's Garage* and the *Shut Up 'n Play Yer Guitar* records. And to go with that, he used an Aphex compressor [*the Expressor*] in the studio to compress the hell out of those flangers. It's what he described as a "pillowy" sound. And I actually have that compressor built into my rack, so I can recreate the exact sound he had in the studio. I also have Frank's Mu-tron Bi-Phase pedal, plus a dbx 162 compressor and Eventide 949 Harmonizer that were his. And there's this thing called the Systech Harmonic Energizer that I put in my rig last year and that Frank used to use in the early Seventies. It's basically a one-band parametric EQ. You just choose a frequency where your guitar naturally resonates and wants to feed back, and add gain. So it's a great distortion element,

and it ends up sounding like a half-cocked wah sometimes. What people think is a wah on Frank's recordings often isn't. If you never hear the envelope change, it's the Systech and not a wah pedal.

GW So that's one element in Frank's characteristic "honky" tone?

ZAPPA Yes. And the Systech eventually prompted him to start putting EQ circuits right into his guitars, which gave his guitars a ton of gain. They had 18dB more output than a normal guitar. So then he would use amps and effects differently. Because he was hitting the front end with so much more signal, he would usually rely only on the power section of his amps and back off on the preamp gain. So his signal wasn't very hissy, even on the loudest, most distorted sounds.

He was really a master of figuring out the right blend of effects and applying all his studio knowledge in a live situation. He used those built-in EQs as an onboard mixing console. When he was standing on a different stage each night, he could dial in the right frequency to make sure his guitar was really cutting through properly.

GW What else is in your rig?

ZAPPA I've got a lot of these new pedals that Andy Fuchs built, from the Plush line that he's created. I'm using his amplifiers as well: two 100-watt heads with a cabinet each, plus a Fender '65 Reissue Twin Reverb that I had modded with an effect loop. The rig also includes an Acoustic 270 solid-state bass amp that Frank actually used onstage in the mid Seventies, with a built-in fuzz circuit and graphic EQ. The cool thing is I found an interview online where he was talking about using that amp, and he gave his exact settings. So I'm able to set it up that way. If you hear it, you'll say, "Oh, that's a Frank sound."

GW So you're really combining historical vintage with ultramodern.

ZAPPA Yeah. I also have two DigiTech GSP 1101 [guitar multi-effect] units. The amp modeling in those is pretty good. I've been skeptical of some of that stuff in the past. But the DigiTechs work

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with a loop through your power amp, so the modeling isn't affected by the preamp, and that makes it a lot more accurate.

The digital brains for the whole rig are two [Sound Sculpture] Switchblade switching units. I had one Switchblade in my old rig. Moving up to two just gives me an insane amount of possibilities. I can route literally anything to anything via a laptop computer and store all the routings as patches that I can call up using an Axess Electronics FX-1 footswitch unit in my pedal board. Part of the way I designed the rig came from my experimenting with Native Instruments' Guitar Rig software, because it lets you create so many advanced signal-processing chains. I can have completely different sounds coming out each of my amps and use a foot pedal to crossfade between them.

GW I know that you learned Frank Gambale's sweep-picking technique to execute some of the really fast passages in Frank's music. But have you been able to customize that technique to your own purposes?

ZAPPA I've been able to come up with some things that I don't hear other players doing. Because there are so many odd groupings that I've learned from Frank's music, I've incorporated some of that into my soloing. So now I can have weird sections where I'm specifically playing two quintuplets, a septuplet or something else. I know where I want to make these odd groupings happen. For example, a quintuplet: one stroke on the high E string, a pulloff and then strokes across the next three strings [B, G and D]. Once you have that as a pattern, you can move it around the fretboard. You won't hear a lot of people playing that.

The hard thing about learning sweep picking is it's really easy to rush or drag something, because the pick can get stuck. There's a lot of scraping across the string action, so you can get stuck and look like a jerk. When it comes to playing really hard things that are in "The Black Page" or "Inca Roads"—things that were never meant to be played on guitar, and where timing is an issue—it takes a lot of practice.

GW Does this require any particular type of pick?

ZAPPA Well, I've started using these picks made by the Red Bear Trading Company, and they're great. They're very firm and have a very smooth surface. This guy makes them by hand and uses a laser to cut in beveled edges. There are a few circular holes in the middle of the pick for a better grip. And this pick makes a huge difference in tone and playability. I can't stress it enough. As hard as some of this music is to play, it's made easier because of the pick. But these aren't picks you'd want to throw out into the audience. They're kind of expensive.

GW What kind of picks did Frank use?

ZAPPA In the early days he was using the little teardrop Gibson picks. When I started playing guitar, I would leave all kinds of picks laying around and Frank started picking up whatever I had. He ended up using Fender mediums for a while. I became friends with [Ratt guitarist] Warren DiMartini, who was using steel picks, and around '87 or '88 Frank switched to steel picks because he liked the

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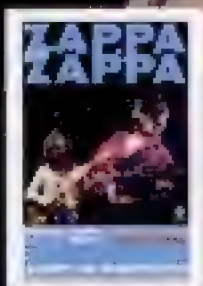
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sound of those. And that was based on Warren DiMartini.

GW One nice thing about the new *Zappa Plays Zappa* DVD is that miniature "guitar cam" you have mounted on your headstock pointing down at the neck. It really lets guitarists get a close look at your picking and fretting techniques.

ZAPPA I made sure we had that, because I knew that there would be times when all the other cameras would be out of place and wouldn't catch key musical moments. We got more out of it than we thought—not only my playing, but in certain shots we can see Steve [Vai] and Napoleon [Murphy Brock] doing other things.

GW Is everyone onstage playing entirely

from memory? Nobody has a chart tucked away somewhere?

ZAPPA No, it's all memory.

GW So what do you have lined up for this year's *Zappa Plays Zappa* tour? Who's going to be joining you?

ZAPPA Ray White [vocalist and guitarist from Frank Zappa's touring ensemble] is coming back on the road with us. Other than that it's just the core band that we've had from day one. We may have some special guests here and there, but the focus has always been on the music and not necessarily special guests. That's more the icing on the cake.

GW How come your brother, Ahmet, and sister Moon aren't involved more in this?

ZAPPA I don't think they're really interested



One of Dweezil's many white Fender Telecasters.

in doing it, because it does take up so much time. Plus the focus that I put on it has really been to highlight the things people don't know about Frank's music—whereas the things that it might be suitable or easier for them to participate in, like "Valley Girl," for instance, come from a part of the catalog that I'm not really emphasizing. Maybe somewhere down the road we'll have some of that going on.

GW Also conspicuous by their absence are any of the original core Mothers of Invention: Jimmy Carl Black...

ZAPPA Yeah, well, there's a reason for that.

GW Is there some bad blood there?

ZAPPA There are definitely some unfortunate behavioral issues that took place over the years and sad things that burned some bridges. So those are invitations that will never be handed out. Make no mistake about it.

GW And what about your own music? Are you ever going to return to that?

ZAPPA Eventually I'll have some time to do it again. I'm interested in doing it, but right now *Zappa Plays Zappa* takes up all of my time. And I'm trying to balance all this work with having a family. My wife and I have a new baby coming, and our daughter is going to be two in July. So you can imagine in 14 years what my house will be like.

GW If you were to be remembered by history as the foremost interpreter of the music of Frank Zappa, rather than for any of your own music, would that be okay with you?

DWEEZIL Well, you know, it's fine with me. Ultimately, I want Frank's music to be preserved for everyone, and I had the feeling that it had the potential to fade away if I didn't do what I'm doing. My perspective is, if you're doing something that benefits people, then it's worth doing. Plus, I enjoy the process. I have a good connection with the music and with Frank by doing this. Even if no one came to the shows, the whole experience of doing this would still have been the best thing I could do as a musician and just personally, for my own relationship with my father. *

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Late night at the Shrine Auditorium

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Lynyrd Skynyrd circa 1970: (from left) Billy Powell, Allen Collins, Leon Wilkeson, Bob Burns, Ronnie Van Zandt, Gary Rossington and Ed King



SURVIVOR

SKILLS



On the 30th anniversary of the release of *STREET SURVIVORS*,

Lynyrd Skynyrd's

final studio album, GARY ROSSINGTON reflects on the legendary southern rock band's turmoil, tragedy and triumphs.

WHEN LYNYRD SKYNYRD RELEASED their fifth studio album, *Street Survivors*, on October 17, 1977, the band was ready to skyrocket to its highest level of success yet. Coming off the momentum of an extremely successful live album, *One More from the Road*, which featured an epic version of the band's southern rock tour de force "Free Bird," *Street Survivors* was Skynyrd's strongest studio effort since 1974's *Second Helping*, which yielded the hit "Sweet Home Alabama." Driven by the one-two punch of the singles "What's Your Name" and "That Smell," *Street Survivors* presented Lynyrd Skynyrd and the formidable three-guitar army of Allen Collins, Steve Gaines and Gary Rossington at the peak of its form.

Tragically, the band's momentum skidded to a halt only three days later when the Convair 240 airliner it chartered crashed in a forest near Gillsburg, Mississippi, on October 20. The crash killed Gaines, lead singer Ronnie Van Zant and background vocalist Cassie

Gaines and seriously injured most of the other band members. It took 10 years for the survivors' psychological wounds to heal enough to motivate them to regroup and form a new version of the band, but by that time the glory days of the southern rock phenomenon that Skynyrd played such a significant role in establishing had long since passed.

Although the members of Lynyrd Skynyrd had no idea that *Street Survivors* would be the last album by the initial incarnation of the band, according to Rossington they put more effort into the record than all of their previous albums combined. While making the album, the members confronted numerous personal demons, most notably Rossington, who overcame the drug and alcohol addictions that inspired Van Zant's lyrics for "That Smell."

Street Survivors took Lynyrd Skynyrd about a full year to complete. The band started work on the album in December 1976 at Miami's Criteria Studios with legendary producer Tom Dowd (who produced *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* among hun-



dreds of classic records from the Sixties and Seventies). That recording of the album was completed by April 1977, but engineer Kevin Elson, who was also the band's live sound engineer, was disappointed with its sound. He allegedly told the band, "If you release this album, your career's over." In the ensuing argument, he and Van Zant nearly came to blows until Gaines spoke up in agreement with Elson.

The band decided a remake was necessary. Starting the process over again at Studio One in Atlanta, Georgia, in August 1977, Skynyrd recorded new versions of several songs and replaced the songs "Georgia Peach" and "Sweet Little Missy" with "I Know a Little," penned by Gaines, and a cover of Merle Haggard's "Honky Tonk Night Time Man."

With this year's release of the 30th Anniversary Deluxe Edition of *Street Survivors*, Skynyrd fans can finally compare the original Criteria Studios version of the album in its entirety with a remastered version of the original release. The package also includes several bonus tracks, including five live songs

from a concert performance in Fresno, California, recorded less than two months before the crash. A side-by-side comparison reveals that the band made the right choice, although one early previously unreleased complete version of "That Smell" is notable for the extended guitar solos at the end of the song.

Original Lynyrd Skynyrd members Gary Rossington and keyboardist Billy Powell are proudly keeping the southern rock tradition alive, and they continue to fly the Skynyrd flag today. "We're working on a new album this year that we hope to put out at the beginning

of next year," says Rossington. "We just want to prove that we're still here. We found an old song we recorded with the whole original band back in the Seventies called 'Cottonmouth Country.' It has Ronnie singing and Al Kooper playing organ on it." [Kooper discovered Skynyrd and produced their first three albums.]

As the band prepares for the Rowdy Frynds Tour with Hank Williams Jr. and a summer tour with Kid Rock, Rossington sat down with *Guitar World* to

talk about *Street Survivors* and how it feels to still be around 30 years later.

GUITAR WORLD What was the band's attitude before you went into the studio to record *Street Survivors*?

GARY ROSSINGTON We were really psyched because we had just gotten [guitarist] Steve Gaines. He brought a big breath of fresh air to the band. We needed that because we had been out on the road so long touring. We were playing the same songs from our first few albums due to constant touring. Finally, we decided to stop, get Steve, change our physical and mental attitude and start fresh.

We toured so much and we were tired of having hangovers, so we decided to stop drinking. Ronnie and his wife just had a baby, and that makes you want to straighten up. We all were trying to do that. It wasn't the easiest thing, but we were doing pretty good. The only temptation was right before we went out onstage, because you get scared. We were still used to playing little clubs and bars. We weren't used to the big time yet. We started drinking when we opened for the Who. Our first gig with them was at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, and that was sold out. I'd never seen that many people before, let alone played for them. It scares the shit out of you. We went runnin' for the whiskey.

GW The band was down to two guitarists on *Gimme Back My Bullets*. What influenced you to bring back a third guitarist?

ROSSINGTON It was getting stagnant with just



The original cover of *Street Survivors* showed the band in flames. It was removed from distribution after Skynyrd's fatal plane crash.

two players. We had Ed King with us before, and we were used to having three guitars. We thought it was better to have three guitars live. That way you could have two guitars playing lead and a rhythm guitar, or two strong rhythms and a lead player, like for "Freebird." We went for so long without a third guitarist because we couldn't find one we liked. We knew a few and tried a few, but the only guy we were thinking of getting was Barry Harwood, who later played with me and Allen Collins in the Rossington-Collins Band.

We met Steve through his sister Cassie, who was one of three female vocalists we hired. Cassie used to talk about how her brother was a great guitar player and was real cool and this and that. We didn't pay much attention at first because we had heard the same thing from everybody and their brother about someone they knew. "Listen to my brother! He's good!" It was like *American Idol*.

One day Steve came to one of our shows, and he was like, "Oh no, I don't want to play for you guys!" He had some class. Finally we talked him into playing "Call Me the Breeze." He noticed that Al and I were playing normal, so he reached in his pocket, grabbed a slide and started playing slide so he would sound different. I did my solo, then he played a slide solo, and then we had him play a solo without slide.

We jammed around for a while, and after that we got to talking to him. He was in a band called Mudcrutch. [Tom Petty played with this band before forming Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, and he recently revived the band.] Right after that show we said, "Come on! You're going to be our third guitarist." And he went, "I can't leave. I live here! My wife and kids are here, and I've got a band." I said, "Call them and tell them that you're leaving but you'll be back in a few weeks." Damn, if he wasn't in the backseat of the van with his suitcase and guitar. We didn't even know him and we took him away with us. It was fun. It made everything feel fresh again, and that was a good thing.

He wrote and co-wrote a lot of songs on *Street Survivors*. He was a great writer. We didn't know him that good when he joined, and we just found out about his songwriting talent afterward.

GW I always thought you were the main slide player in the band.

ROSSINGTON Oh, no. Ed King also played slide, and Steve played slide on "T For Texas" on the live album as well as the solo to "I Know a Little" on *Street Survivors*. Steve was a great slide player. He could play anything. He was raised on Motown music and things like Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. Those Motown and blues players were different than us southern guys. Steve had a different style that we just loved. I



Collins, Van Zandt and Rossington



(from left) Collins, Rossington, Wilkeson and Steve Gaines, Glasgow, Scotland, on February 9, 1977

"YOU KNOW WHY YOU FALL DOWN? JUST SO YOU CAN GET BACK UP."

couldn't play like him, but he could play like anybody. He really had his own style. He was one of the best guitarists I've ever played with.

GW Skynyrd was one of the first big bands to use Peavey amps. What influenced that decision?

ROSSINGTON We were using Marshalls, but during soundcheck we'd run out front to hear what it sounded like. About 50 feet from the stage the sound became tinny and lost all its bottom. Hartley Peavey had given us a Mace amp to try out, and you could back up 100 yards and it would sound the same the whole way. It didn't lose anything. We thought that was the coolest thing in the world, so we switched to Peavey. I still have the same Peavey Mace amp that I used 35 years ago. It's still kickin'.

GW Did you use the Peavey amps in the studio as well?

ROSSINGTON I used my main Peavey in the studio, but we also used a variety of other amps as well. Leon [Wilkeson, bassist] had an Ampeg bass amp, and sometimes we'd plug the Peavey head into his bass cabinet. We'd fool around with a couple of Fender amps, a Marshall and the Peavey and mic those and blend them together. Most of the time we were just happy with our live sound. We thought that our music was our gimmick, and we wanted our songs to sound the way we played them live. That was our forte. We liked to tour and play live, so we made sure that we could play anything we recorded live and have it sound the same.

GW Do you still have the '59 Gibson Les Paul that you were playing with Skynyrd in the Seventies?

ROSSINGTON I do. I call her "Bernice." Right now it's in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for the next four years. I might just donate it to them. It's better than having it sitting around in the closet where it could get burned in a fire or stolen. That guitar means a lot to me, the band and the fans. They put it on display right in the middle of the main exhibit hall next to Duane All-

man's Les Paul. I'm very honored to have it there. Gibson made me a signature model Les Paul that sounds, plays and looks just like the original. That's what I play on stage now. I'm keepin' it goin'.

GW Did you play any other guitars on *Street Survivors*?

ROSSINGTON No. It was always the Les Paul for me. I played an SG, but the Les Paul was my signature sound with the band. I kept it that way so everybody else would sound different. Steve would always play a Strat or Telecaster, and Al would play his Explorer, which had a bassy tone.

GW Did you use the SG primarily for slide?

ROSSINGTON Yes. I had the action raised a little bit so it wouldn't fret out, but the action was low enough that I could play it normally, too. Those old humbuckers just scream. I love that old Cream-style sound. I'd rather hear a sound like that than some of today's newer tones.

GW The band had worked with Tom Dowd before on *Gimme Back My Bullets*. Why weren't things working with him when you recorded the first version of *Street Survivors*?

ROSSINGTON We were down in Miami recording at Criteria Studios, but we thought the sounds weren't good enough. Tom wasn't spending enough time on our sound. We had always recorded at Studio One in Atlanta, and we were comfortable there. We had done one other album at the Record Plant in L.A., but we just kept asking to go back to Atlanta.

At that time Tom was getting a divorce, and I think Ronnie was having some sort of domestic trouble. Everybody was having personal troubles. Kevin Ellson was with us, and he was

co-producing and engineering with Tom in Miami, so we just took Kevin with us to Studio One. Tom came by there and added his two cents, but he wanted to go back to Miami. We re-recorded a few songs in Atlanta and a few of them we left as they were. We weren't happy with the tones on some songs we recorded, like "Sweet Little Missy" and "Georgia Peaches," so we left them off the final album.

GW On the versions of the songs recorded with Tom Dowd, the guitars don't sound as full and the vocals aren't as powerful.

ROSSINGTON That's exactly what we were saying. We were trying to tell Tom that, but he was more into a feel than the sound. If it felt good, you could tap your foot to it and if there weren't any major mistakes he'd just go with it. Tom had

recorded everybody from the Allman Brothers and Cream to Ray Charles. He was a genius. But if you listen to some of those songs there are mistakes here and there. He just let them go because it sounded so good. That makes it sound real, so that's cool.

GW But the recordings you made at Studio One sound much more powerful. It's closer to what the band sounded like live.

ROSSINGTON We were used to recording there. We just set the whole band up so we could look at each other while we were playing. It got the sound. It was so long ago it's hard to remember all the reasons why we weren't happy with our first attempt to make the album. There were a bunch of reasons, not just one. When you added it all together, it made more

sense for us to move to Studio One.

GW It's been said that your drug and alcohol use inspired the writing of "That Smell," one of Skynyrd's biggest hits. How did you feel about being singled out for that?

ROSSINGTON My joke answer is always, "Well, at least we got a good song out of it." It was a bad time for me. I was drinking a lot and not doing very well. I had a car accident where I actually hit an oak tree. And they used to call me "Prince Charming" back then because I was a polite southern gentleman. [The nickname is referenced in the song: "Now they call you Prince Charming."]

GW You also looked like a real lady-killer.

ROSSINGTON That helped, too. At that time we were hanging around with the Allman Brothers Band. They were into some really bad drugs and had gotten busted at a truck stop. People used to say, "You seen Gregg Allman lately? He's got the smell of death around him." That was a saying down South, so Ronnie took that and wrote a song about it. I learned my lesson, and we got a song out of it.

GW *Street Survivors* has a few autobiographical songs like "You Got That Right" and "What's Your Name" that reflect the band's good times.

ROSSINGTON This new deluxe set brings back a lot of memories. When I listen to the music or see a picture from then, I really remember that it was a great time. A lot of good things happened back then, although some bad things happened, too. I broke my guitar Bernie when we were making that album. I left it in the studio, and the maid was cleaning up and knocked it over, which cracked off the headstock. We had to cancel the session that day. Everybody started crying. It freaked me out so bad that I went outside and started walking with my head straight down.

Tom Dowd got in his car and went out looking for me. He found me about a mile from the studio and asked, "What's going on back there? It's like everyone is in mourning." I told him that my baby, my '59 Les Paul, got broken. We wrote every one of our songs on that guitar. He freaked out too, and we drove around about an hour and talked. It was like a person had died. The next day I came in, and it was already fixed and sitting there. We ended up fixing it with some super strong glue, and it's been fine since. It always stayed in tune and never gave me any more trouble, so in the end it just became another story.

GW It seems ironic that the band had successfully beaten its personal demons only to be struck down by a tragic accident.

ROSSINGTON You know why you fall down? Just so you can get back up. There's been a lot of water under the bridge since the accident, and we've made a lot of music since then. I think that Ronnie and Steve would be happy that we carried on the name 30 years later. We're still spreading the music that we had such a great belief in. It was our childhood and teenage dream to make it as a band. We're still helping out their families. The people love the music and we love the people. I'm lucky. I've got a great family life and I've got a great life with the band. Billy Powell and I talk about how we get to be parents and grandparents for a week or two a month and then we're out playing the role of the star again. Somehow it all worked out to be good. *

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WIDE-STRETCH DRONE LICKS, AND THE "OVER-THE-TOP THUMB TRICK"



HEY, WHAT'S UP? Before we get into this month's topic I'd like to say a quick but sincere "Thank you!" to the many thousands of you that have already come out to support Gigantour. Even

though it's only just started, the turnout at all the shows has been incredible, and I love the fact that even the critics are saying nice things about it! In fact, they've been proclaiming this year's bill as the best and most diverse lineup yet, which is quite an accolade as both of the previous Gigantour line-ups have had great bands. It looks like Gigantour is fast becoming a franchise in its own right without being correlated with Megadeth or myself, which is exciting too.

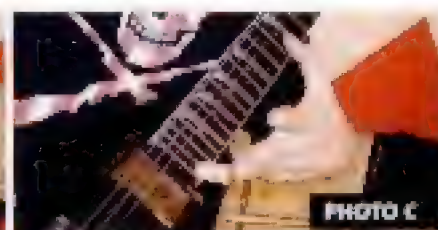
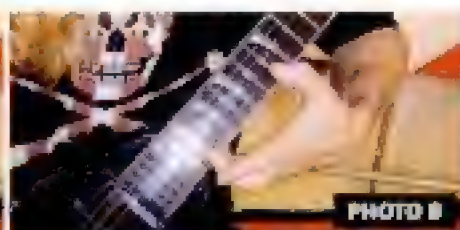
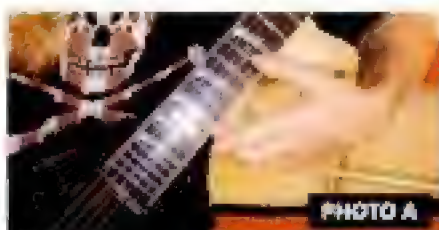
This month we're going to look at a few wide-stretch licks that have become something of my trademark. The first one under the microscope is an **F#** minor blues lick (**FIGURE 1**) similar to one I play in the song that opens our current set, "Sleepwalker." For all intents and purposes the lick I'm playing is basically an Ace Frehley-type pentatonic lick like the one shown in **FIGURE 2**, but with a subtle twist to it.

As you can see in the CD-ROM video footage of me playing **FIGURE 1**, I barre the top four strings at the 14th fret with my index finger and then leave it there throughout the lick. What I'm effectively doing here is using my first finger as a capo. I could easily play this phrase without doing that, but I'd lose the advantage of having the strings that aren't played ringing sympathetically underneath the ones that are, which creates a drone-y, almost sitar-like effect. If you listen carefully you can hear what I'm talking about.

FIGURE 4 is similar to what's probably my most well known wide-stretch lick, the one I do towards the very end of "Holy Wars." What I'm doing here is playing the wide-stretch, pull-off lick on the B and G strings shown in **FIGURE 3** and shifting it up the neck, one fret at a time. To play this lick, I barre the top three strings with my index finger even though I don't use the high E string. I do this because, once again, this allows the unused barred string to resonate in the background, which to me sound pretty interesting.

The final wide-stretch lick I'm going to show you is one from "Washington Is Next!" I start off with a typical "chicken-pickin' " pull-off lick in **FIGURE 5** and then expand it into **FIGURE 6** by quickly bringing my fret-hand thumb around to the front of the fretboard and capo-ing the high E and B strings with it. This "over-the-top thumb trick" not only looks pretty cool, it also increases

the span of your fretting hand considerably—from about seven frets to an entire octave (12 frets). **FIGURE 7** is another wide-interval lick that I play



using this same technique.


Experiment with these ideas in your own licks, and I'll see you next month, or on the road... 



FIGURE 1

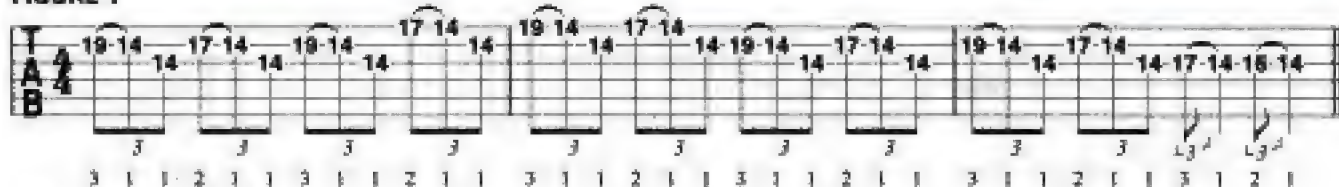


FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5 "typical, block-head, chicken-pickin' pull-off"



FIGURE 6



photo: (A) *T = first-order thumb

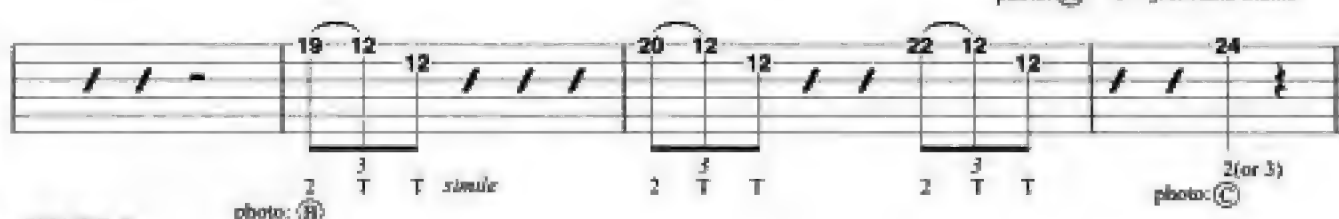
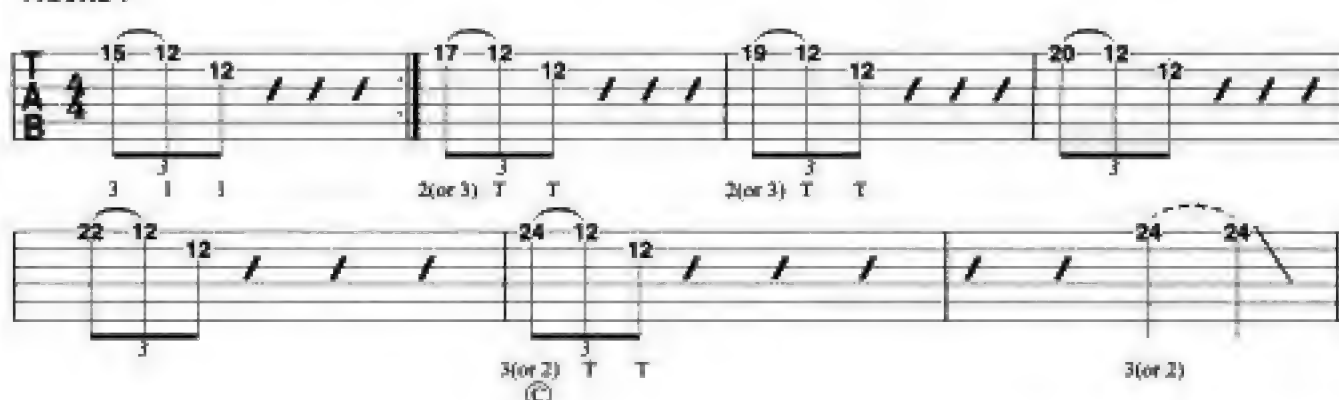


FIGURE 7



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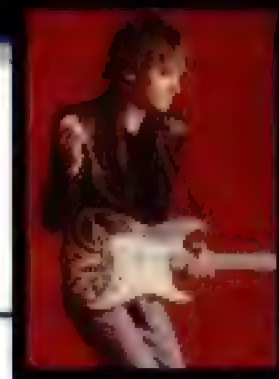


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THE HEXATONIC "BLUES" SCALES

INVITING THE DEVIL BACK TO THE PARTY



RICHARD LLOYD is a founding member of the rock band Television and teaches aspiring guitarists at his studio in New York City. His new album, *The Radiant Monkey*, is available on Parasol Records. For more information, visit richardlloyd.com and parasol.com.

IN RECENT MONTHS we have been looking at the major pentatonic scale, which is derived from the major scale by removing the tritone interval—that is, by removing from the major scale the fourth and seventh tones or degrees, yielding a scale that's spelled 1 2 3 5 6. Reorienting and renumbering the scale using the sixth degree as the root, or tonic, yields the relative minor pentatonic scale, spelled 1 b3 4 5 b7 (or 1 m3 4 5 m7).

The pentatonic scales solve many of the problems inherent in the major scale and its modes by removing the two half steps and the tritone. Both the major and minor modes of the pentatonic scale are elegant and probably account for 80% of the content of lead guitarist's solos. Yet they are also kind of boring in that they are like a party where all the invitees are gracious and mild-mannered. A clever host will make certain to invite at least one rogue, to keep things interesting.

That's the same thing that we're about to do with the two relative pentatonic scales. We're going to accomplish this introduction of mischief by adding a single note, which to the major pentatonic scale is the flatted, or minor, third (b3) and to the minor pentatonic scale the flatted, or diminished, fifth (b5). This gives us a *hexatonic*, or six-note, scale. The serendipitous fact is that both of these tones are in the same place—it just depends upon whether you consider the pentatonic major or minor. The added note reintroduces a tritone interval to the pentatonic scale, formed between degrees 6 and b3 in major hexatonic and between 1 and b5 in the minor hexatonic.

You may recognize these scales as the major and minor "blues scales." In Western music theory, the "blue" notes are considered to be the b3, b5 and b7. In actuality, the blue notes are microtonal—they fall in between the equal-tempered tones and can only be played on a standard guitar by bending strings or playing with a slide or whammy bar. In their true location, the blue notes can be found between the b3

and the 3, slightly sharper than the equal-tempered b5 and slightly flatter than the equal-tempered b7.

But back to the business at hand. I'm not going to bother showing you diagrams of all five pentatonic and hexatonic boxes; if you want to see them, go to www.richardlloyd.com/lessons/index.htm and look up the lesson called "The Pentatonic Prayer Wheel." For this column, I'm going to show you one box and then concentrate on the diagonal fretboard patterns that emphasize the whole steps, with the minor thirds occurring between two sequential notes on adjacent strings.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the most widely known box, with the added hexatonic tone, and **FIGURE 2** depicts the diagonal "tree" pattern containing the extra note.

In previous columns, I showed you how you can maintain the same fingering pattern as you ascend the fretboard by sliding a finger up one whole step on the string you're playing and continuing the fingering pattern over the next two strings. To play **FIGURE 2** in this lesson, instead of sliding, I want you to use all four fingers to play the first four notes on the low E string, beginning with the index finger. To play the two notes on the A string, bring up the index finger and use it and the ring finger. Then, start the whole pattern over again one octave and two frets higher on the D string. You will be able to play three octaves before you run out of strings.

Now I'm going to show you two other interesting and useful scale patterns that you can practice in alternation with one another. Recall that when constructing the minor pentatonic from the major scale, we used the b3 to replace both 2 and 3 and b7 to replace both 6 and 7. Now, using **FIGURE 2** as a template, we can similarly sculpt a couple of interestingly contoured five-note scales from the major hexatonic: one will contain the 2 and the b3 and omit the 3 (**FIGURE 3**); the other will leave out the 2 and contain the both b3 and 3 (**FIGURE 4**).

Good luck, practice heavy, analyze and utilize. See you next month. □

◆ = minor root ■ = major root ○ = b3/b5 / indicates tritone interval

FIGURE 1 G minor/Bb major blues hexatonic box

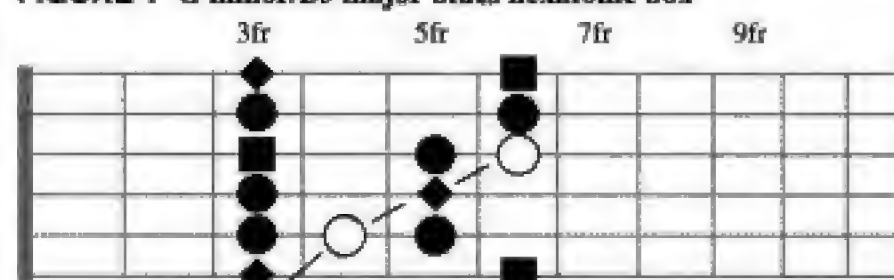


FIGURE 2 G major/E minor blues hexatonic tree

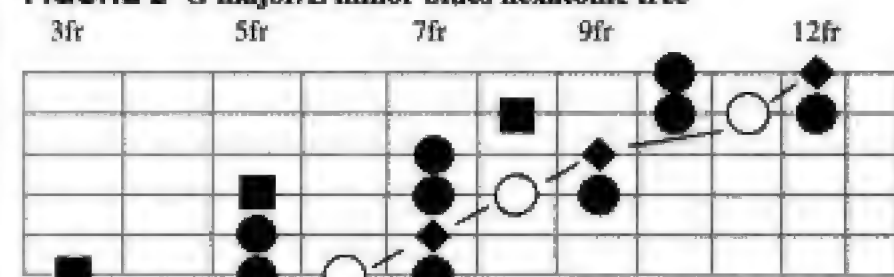


FIGURE 3 G major blues hexatonic with "3" omitted

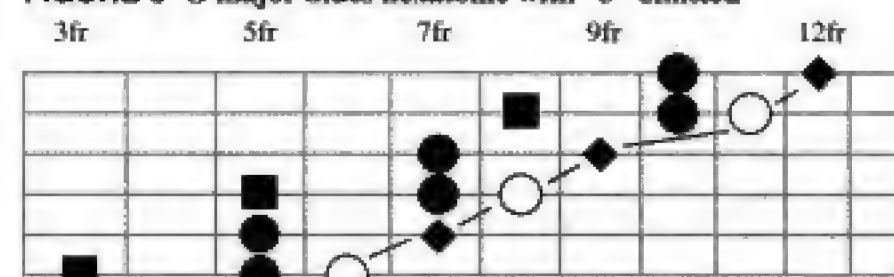
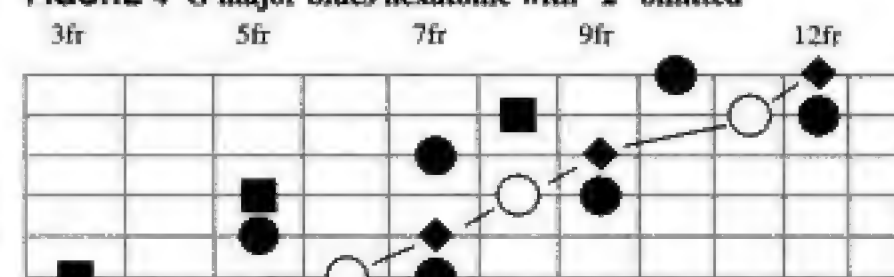
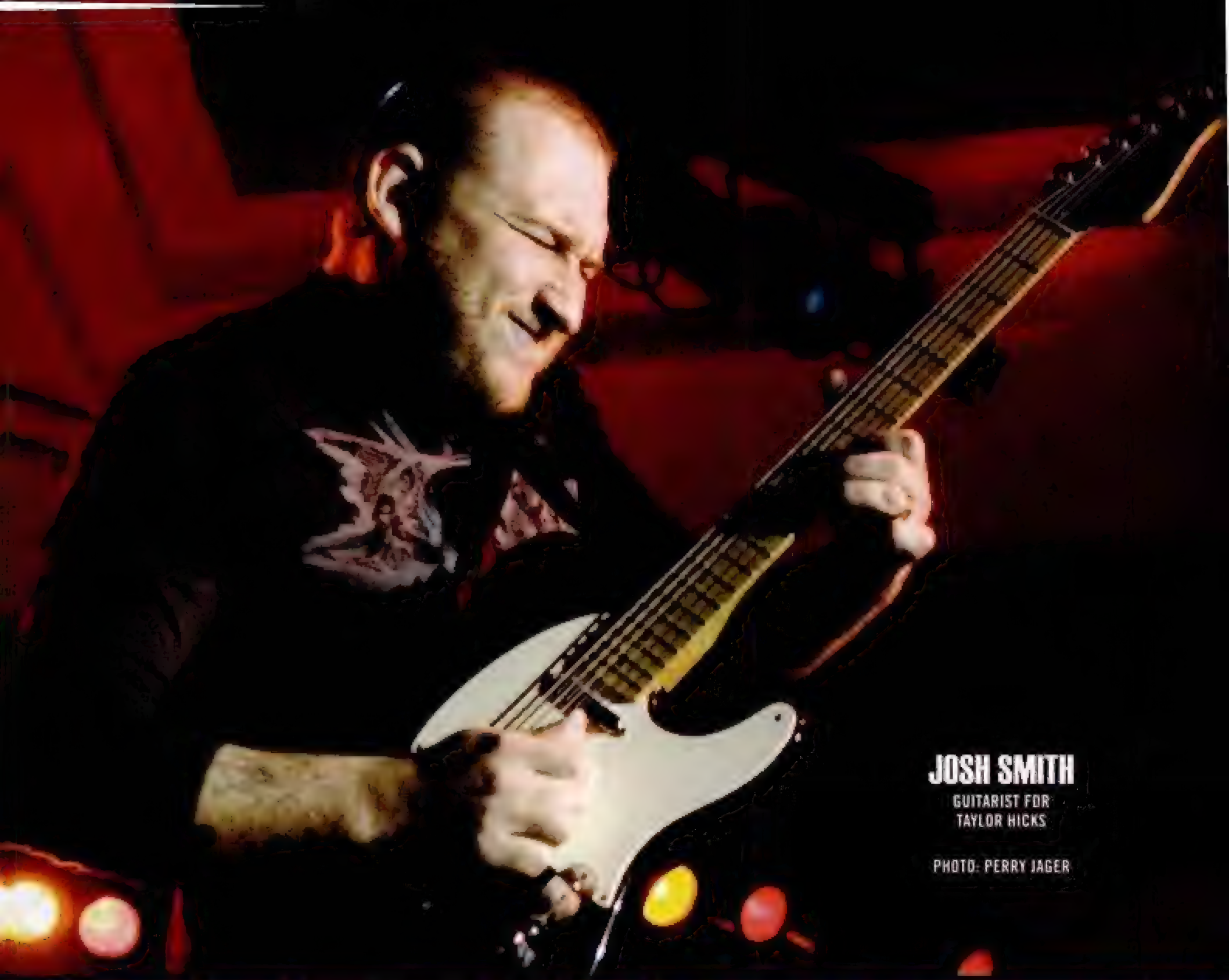


FIGURE 4 G major blues hexatonic with "2" omitted





JOSH SMITH

GUITARIST FOR
TAYLOR HICKS

PHOTO: PERRY JAGER

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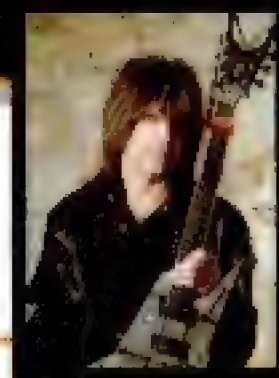


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ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE

HOW TO SOLO OVER A SINGLE CHORD



MANY OF THE SONGS I perform live require that I play improvised solos over a one-chord "vamp"—a repeated band figure or rhythm part that is based on a single chord. In these

situations, I always ask myself, What can I do to make things sound more interesting than what the listener would normally expect? While I could easily stick with specific scales or riffs based on that particular chord, one approach I often take is to play melodic lines that outline and imply other chords strung together in a progression over the single-chord vamp. This technique makes the melodic lines sound more interesting by pulling the ear in different directions, away from the static harmony provided by just one chord.

For example, when soloing over a rhythm part that sits on an E chord, one approach I like to take is to use the notes of an E minor scale to build different triads and play a sequence of these triads to superimpose an implied chord progression. This creates the impression of a more complex harmony than that of the single chord.

FIGURE 1 illustrates a simple yet very effective way to accomplish this. Here, I play a descending pattern on the top two strings that outlines different triadic forms found within the structure of the E Dorian mode (E F# G A B C# D; see **FIGURE 2**). Keep in mind that E Dorian is a minor mode and is based on the same intervallic structure as the D major scale, the only difference being the orientation of the notes around an E root. The rhythm part I'm soloing over sticks with a repeated E5 chord through the first six beats of the two-bar example. On beats three and four of bar 2, the chords are G5 and A5, respectively, but the overall tonality remains E minor.

The lead line in **FIGURE 1** is built on a 16th-note-triplet rhythm. While the feel is that of three evenly spaced notes on each downbeat and upbeat, I play only two notes on each downbeat, leaving out the middle note and playing just the first and third notes of the triplet. Dropping the middle note serves to give the line more "bounce." Notice also that I use pull-offs at the same point on each beat throughout the phrase.

To imply a harmonic progression, I play an arpeggio-based line that outlines the following chords, all of which are derived from the E Dorian

Tune down one half step (low to high, E> A> D> G> B> E).

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 1 shows a guitar solo (Gtr. 1) and a rhythm part (Gtr. 2) over a single chord (E5). The solo is in 4/4 time and features a descending pattern on the top two strings, outlined by different triadic forms found within the structure of the E Dorian mode. The rhythm part is a repeated E5 chord. The solo is built on a 16th-note-triplet rhythm. The chords outlined are (Em), (D), (C#°), (Bm), (A), (G), (F#m), and (Em7). The solo ends with a pull-off at the 5th fret.

FIGURE 2 E Dorian

FIGURE 2 shows the E Dorian mode scale. The scale is in 4/4 time and is based on the same intervallic structure as the D major scale, the only difference being the orientation of the notes around an E root. The scale is: E F# G A B C# D. The solo is built on a 16th-note-triplet rhythm. The chords outlined are (Em), (D), (C#°), (Bm), (A), (G), (F#m), and (Em7). The solo ends with a pull-off at the 5th fret.

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 3 shows a guitar solo (Gtr. 1) and a rhythm part (Gtr. 2) over a single chord (E5). The solo is in 4/4 time and features a descending pattern on the top two strings, outlined by different triadic forms found within the structure of the E Dorian mode. The rhythm part is a repeated E5 chord. The solo is built on a 16th-note-triplet rhythm. The chords outlined are (Em), (D), (C#°), (Bm), (A), (G), (F#m), and (Em7). The solo ends with a pull-off at the 5th fret.

mode: Em (E G B), D (D F# A), C#° (C# E G), Bm (B D F#), A (A C# E), G (G B D) F#m (F# A C#) and finally Em one octave lower. To facilitate the desired phrasing, I also add a seventh to each arpeggio, which isn't as prominent as the other notes and serves more as filler. There is one nonscale tone present in the sequence: within the implied A chord on beat one of bar 2, I play G# instead of the expected diatonic G natural. The G# sounds cooler to me, and frankly, using it makes the riff easier to play.

In **FIGURE 3** I play the same arpeggio sequence and fill out the full three-note triplet on each downbeat, picking every note and using alternate (down-up) picking. It's amazing how different a

riff can sound by simply altering your picking technique!

FIGURE 4 demonstrates a completely different and equally effective way to apply this concept. While still outlining a superimposed chord progression with the use of arpeggio-based riffs on each beat, here I outline triads on the downbeats and add other, scale-based notes on the upbeats. The first three notes of each beat in bar 1 and beat one in bar 2 are articulated with a downstroke sweep, followed by an up-down-up alternate picking sequence. The riff ends with a descending symmetrical shape played across the high E, B and G strings, making brief reference to the C# Dorian mode (C# D# E F# G# A# B) and the C# blues scale (C# E F# G# B). □



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THE SLIDE ZONE

BOTTLENECK GUITAR WITH FINGERPICKING AND OPEN TUNINGS



TWO TECHNIQUES CLOSELY associated with slide guitar are fingerpicking and the use of open tunings. An open tuning is one in which the guitar is tuned to a specific chord.

which is then sounded by strumming the open strings or barring across all the strings at a given fret. Many of the great slide guitar players in blues and rock history have favored open tunings, most commonly major-chord tunings like E, A, D and G.

The open tuning I am most familiar with and use most often when playing slide is open E (low to high, E B E G# B E). I also occasionally use open A (low to high, E A E A C# E). To tune to open E, leave your low and high E strings and the B string tuned normally; tune the A string up one whole step to B, the D string up one whole step to E, and the G string up one half step to G#. In this tuning, strumming across all the open strings will sound an E major chord with E root notes on the open sixth, fourth and first strings. Barring across all six strings will sound a major chord with the root notes again located on the sixth, fourth and first strings. Chord names can easily be determined from the note sounded on the sixth string, as one normally does when playing sixth-string-root barre chords in standard tuning.

I learned a lot about playing in open E tuning from listening to blues slide guitar legend Elmore James. For me, one of the most important things to focus on when playing slide is *fingerpicking*. Very rarely do I use a pick when playing slide, simply because I prefer the clarity of sound and tonal variations afforded by using my fingers. **FIGURE 1** illustrates an Elmore James-style slide lick played in open E, with all of the notes positioned directly above either the 10th or 12th fret. **FIGURE 2** is along the same lines, but I additionally slide up to the 15th fret on the first string to sound a high G note.


Though I play these licks with a pick, I usually find this more limiting than fingerpicking. Using my bare fingers to pick the strings, I can achieve what I think of as a "push-pull" feel in my articulation. When playing **FIGURE 3**, I keep the pick tucked away in the joint of my pick hand's index finger, and I primarily use the thumb and middle fingers to pick. The push-pull

idea comes from quickly alternating between the thumb and middle finger, as I do to play the riff shown in bar 1.

I continue to pick with just the thumb and middle finger through the end of bar 5. For the first three beats of bar 6 I additionally employ the ring finger so that I can pick *thumb-middle-ring* when playing the three-note arpeggios. At the end of the lick, be sure to allow all of the strings to ring together.

Essential to making each note sound clearly is *pick-hand muting*. To achieve this, lay the edge of your palm across the strings somewhere over the bridge pickup. I ease up the degree of muting

pressure against the strings depending on which strings I want to ring out. A good practice technique is to pick the open strings individually in different patterns, being careful to allow only the string being picked to sound. If you didn't mute with the pick hand at all, all of the notes would "bleed" together, resulting in an indistinguishable mess.

This is the final installment of my column for the time being. It has been a real pleasure sharing my playing approach with you. Hopefully some of the techniques covered in these columns have been helpful to you in your pursuit of becoming a better guitarist. See you on the road! 

ON DISC

Tune to open E (low to high: E B E G[#] B E).

FIGURE 1

Freely

N.C.(E)
no/for/ade

**FIGURE 2**

Freely

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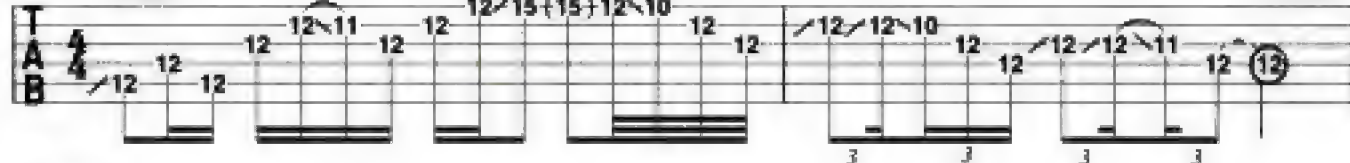


FIGURE 3

Freely

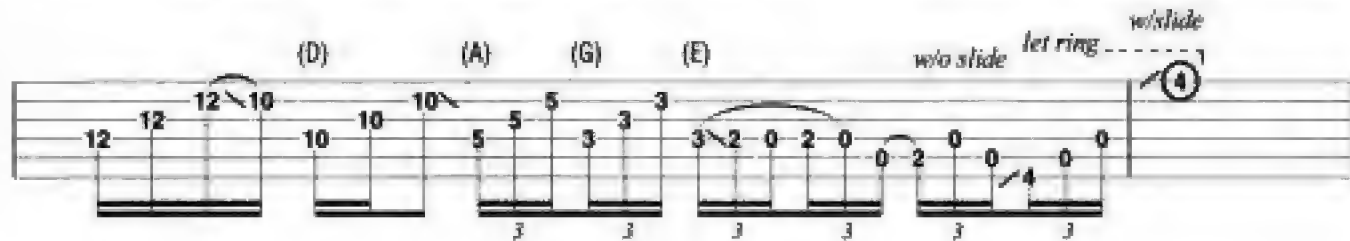
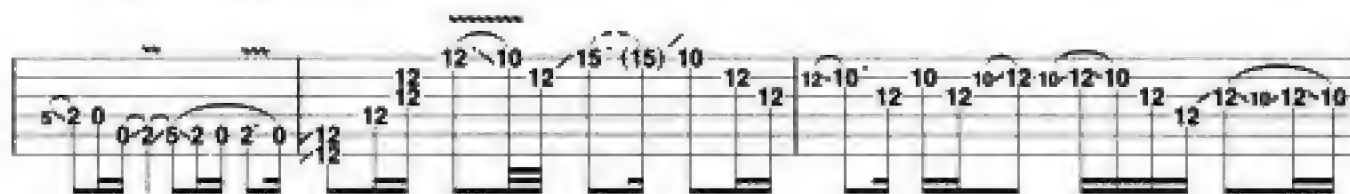
N.C.(E)

my'sticle

*fingerstyle



*fingerpick with thumb and middle and ring fingers index holds pick.



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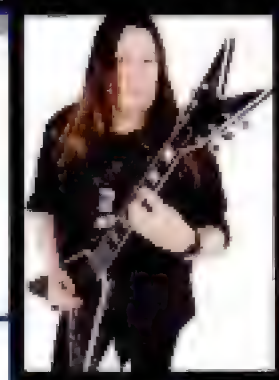
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DEATH-METAL DIADS

PERCUSSIVE PICKING EXERCISES, AND USING MINOR AND MAJOR DIADS TO ADD DARKNESS AND MYSTERY TO A RIFF

ON DISC



LAST MONTH WE got into the importance of down picking when playing rhythm. This month we're going to start off with a few warm-up exercises that really zone in on your

picking hand. **FIGURE 1** is a simple warm-up that has you chugging on an open E5 power chord and single E notes using downstrokes only. Start off slowly and gradually build up speed. This drill is very basic, but it effectively gets the job done, as it really zones in on your down-picking precision and stamina.

FIGURE 2 builds on this 16th-note rhythm pattern by adding some "gallops" (pairs of 32nd notes). To perform each gallop you'll have to use a down-up combination of pick strokes, as indicated above the tab. You'll notice that, in addition to the picking change on each gallop, I also strum the A string, fretted at the second fret and momentarily suspend the right-hand palm muting, which lets the sound "open up" a little bit. This adds more saturation to the gallop and almost gives me that accented, snare drum-to-tom sound. This kind of playing is very percussive, and I think like a drummer when I'm doing this sort of thing. I've noticed that a lot of lead-oriented guitarists don't really get this aspect of rhythm guitar. They'll play something like this with correct timing, but they'll miss the pick-hand feel.

FIGURE 3 is a similar kind of percussive, warm-up gallop idea, but here I add a few fretted power chords and chord slides to the mix so that the fret-hand gets into the action, too.

DARK-SOUNDING DIADS

ONE THING I really like to do is incorporate major and minor diads (two-note chords; see **PHOTO A** and **DIAGRAMS 2** and **3**) into a riff instead of using just single notes and root/fifth power chord shapes (**DIAGRAM 1**). Switching things around like this gives a riff more of a European death metal sound.

FIGURE 4 is an example of what I'm talking about; it's a power chord riff with muted, open low E notes pedaled between root-fifth chords. Now check out **FIGURE 5**, which is the same riff but with some of the root/fifth chords replaced by major and minor diads. Hear the difference in the character of the riff?

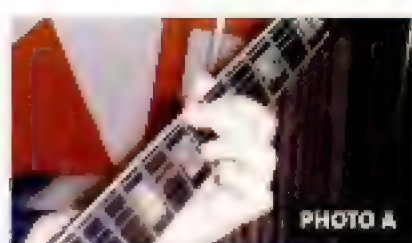


PHOTO A

I didn't get into doing this until I heard Emperor's *Anthems to the Welkin at Dusk* in 1997. That album has a lot of those kinds of chords in there, and it really opened my mind to getting more of a darker, mys-

terious sound. I really started injecting those influences and elements into my own riff writing with Testament on 1999's *The Gathering*. You can hear something like this on the chorus of "D.N.R." □

FIGURE 1

downstrokes only
P.M.

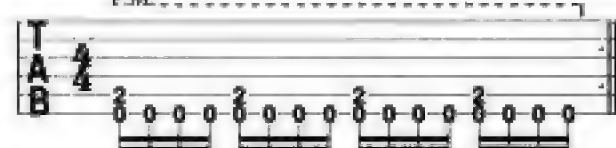
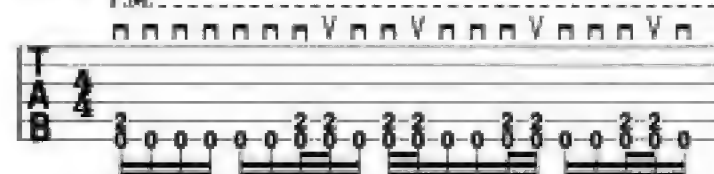


FIGURE 2

P.M.



P.M.

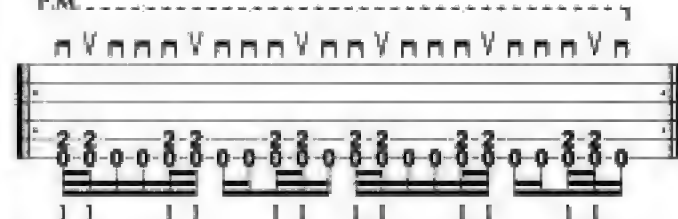


FIGURE 3

P.M.

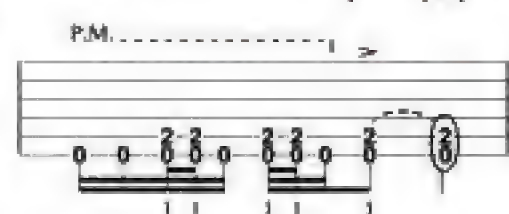
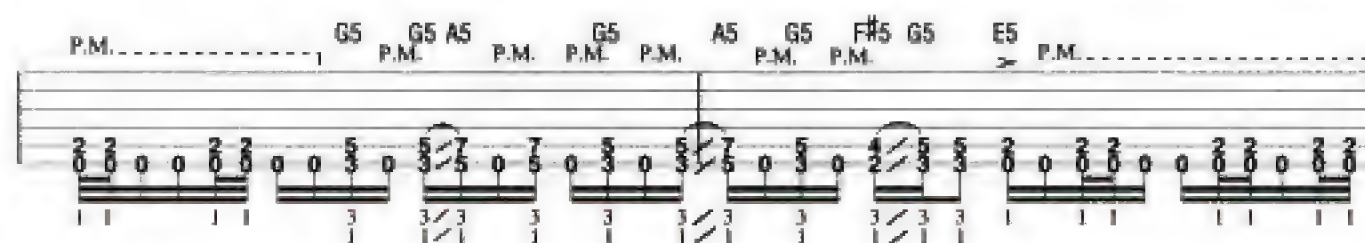


DIAGRAM 1

moveable root/fifth power chord



● = root * = 5th

DIAGRAM 2

moveable major diad



● = root ■ = major 3rd

DIAGRAM 3

moveable minor diad



● = root ◆ = minor 3rd

FIGURE 4

downstrokes only

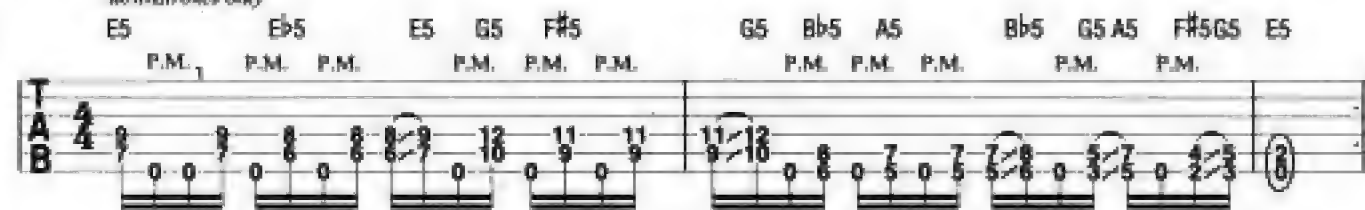
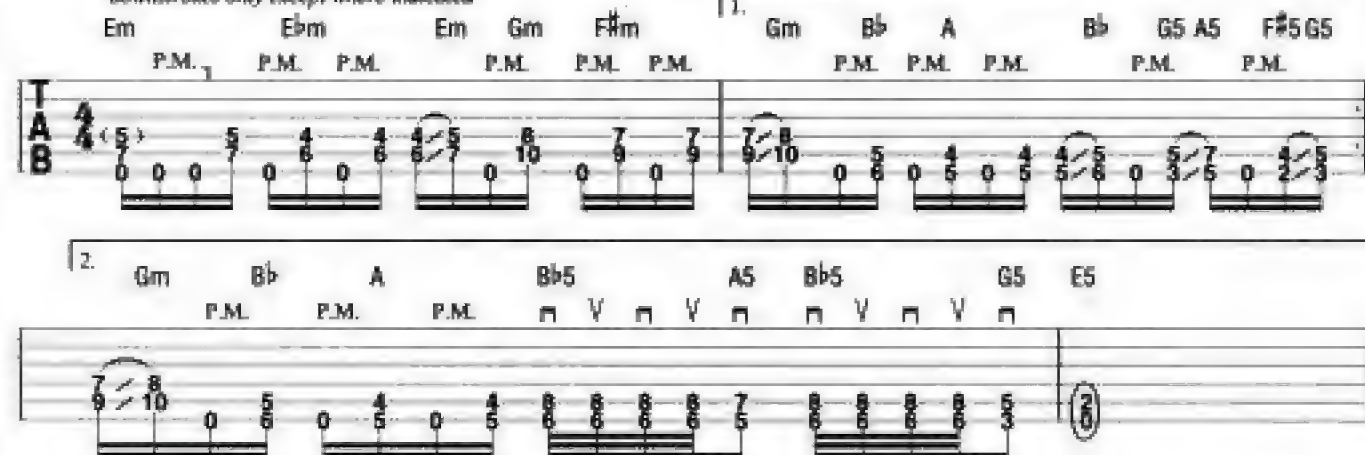


FIGURE 5

downstrokes only except where indicated





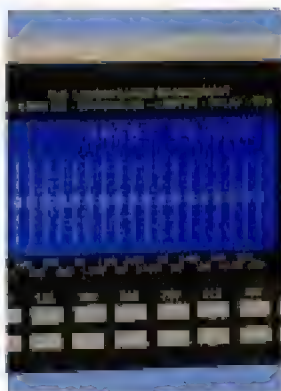
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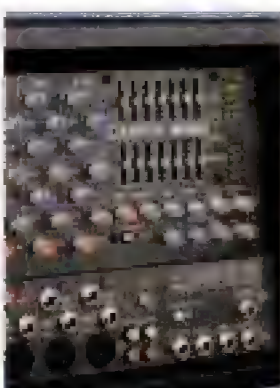
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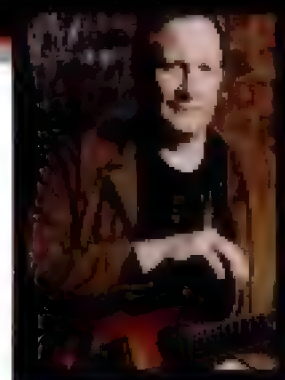
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IN THE FEBRUARY 2008 issue, I introduced the concept of using a stacked interval structure on the top four strings to generate beautifully unusual, exotic-sounding chord voicings within

a particular scale. Many of you have written in asking me to explore this topic further and demonstrate some practical applications, and since there's now a video component to this column on the *Guitar World* CD-ROM, I thought it would be worthwhile to revisit the topic this month and perform some examples with bass accompaniment that will let you hear how cool this approach is.

As you may recall, the concept involves taking a stack of intervals on the top four strings, with all the notes belonging to a particular scale, and "walking up the scale" on each string, in the process generating a set of highly unusual diatonic chord voicings spawned by the initial interval structure. I used the C major scale (C D E F G A B) for the first example, stacking three interval types: a *fourth*, on the D and G strings, a *second*, on the G and B, and a *sixth*, on the B and high E.

FIGURE 1 illustrates how this process works, beginning in the lowest possible position and ascending one octave (12 frets) through the scale. Notice that each voicing has both a "tight" and an "open" quality. This is due to the juxtaposition of a narrow and a wide interval (the second and sixth, respectively). Also notice the rhythmic phrasing, which is played with a swing feel and incorporates eighth-note syncopations and anticipations. This kind of phrasing is the hallmark of jazz chord *comping* (accompaniment) and is very catchy and driving when pitted against a quarter-note bass line. As you'll hear in the video for this lesson, this and all remaining examples are played over a low bass pedal tone played in steady quarter notes.

FIGURES 2-8 demonstrate how this very same set of interval stacks can be applied with various phrasing approaches over different bass pedal tones derived from the C major scale to create lush, interesting comp voicings and chord melodies in the scale's relative modes, such as D Dorian, F Lydian and G Mixolydian. You'll find that these atypical stacks offer you decidedly fresh-sounding alternatives to the standard major, minor and dominant seventh, ninth and 13th chord voicings that everyone plays. □

FIGURE 1 C Ionian: bass pedals C root with steady quarter notes
Medium Swing



FIGURE 2 D Dorian: bass pedals D root



FIGURE 3 D Dorian



FIGURE 4 D Dorian



FIGURE 5 E Phrygian: bass pedals E root

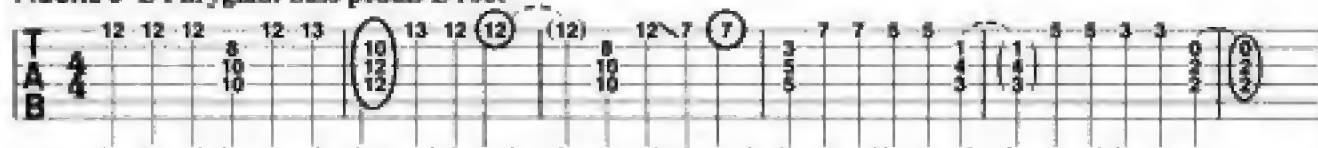


FIGURE 6 F Lydian: bass pedals F root

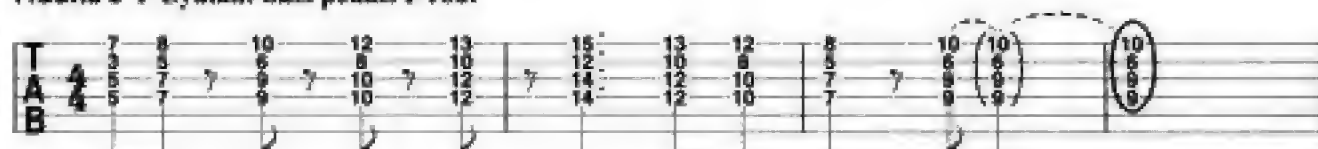
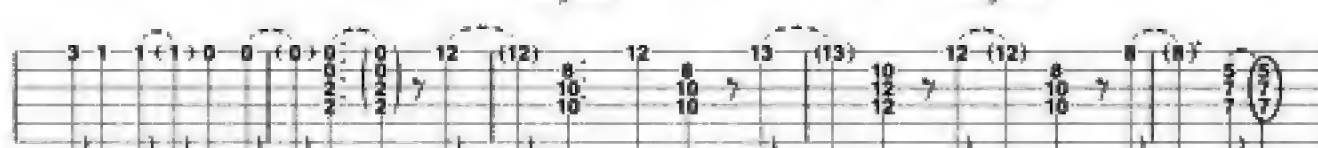


FIGURE 7 G Mixolydian: bass pedals on G root



FIGURE 8 A Aeolian: bass pedals on A root



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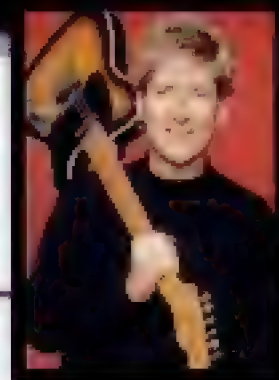
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CHORD LICKS

A ROCKER'S APPROACH TO CHORD-MELODY STYLE IMPROVISING



SOMETIMES IT SEEMS the mere mention of the term "chord-melody"—the art of creating melodies with chord voicings—can send rock guitarists running for the hills.

Too often considered to be useful solely in the jazz realm, chord-melody techniques can, when employed artfully, add some serious girth and weight to a rock solo. The catalogs of rhythm/lead masters such as Pete Townshend, Eric Johnson, Eddie Van Halen and Jimi Hendrix (to name just a few) are strewn with rocking examples of chord-based soloing. In this month's lesson we'll attempt to delve into the mindset of these chord wizards by exploring the basics of scale harmony, from a rock perspective.

"POWER" CHORD MELODY

It's no secret that power chords (root/fifth voicings) provide the fuel for many of rock's most famous riffs ("Iron Man," "Smoke on the Water" and "Smells Like Teen Spirit" immediately come to mind), but did you know that they can also be used in a soloing context—in lieu of single-note melodies? Take the E natural minor scale: E F♯ G A B C D. [For the sake of continuity, we'll be staying in the keys of E natural minor (a.k.a. Aeolian) and E Dorian (E F♯ G A B C♯ D) throughout this lesson.] In place of using single notes to construct a solo in E natural minor, you could substitute power chord voicings built on each note of the scale: E5, F♯5, G5, A5, B5, C5, and D5. All of these voicings are *diatonic* (made up of notes belonging to the same scale) to the E natural minor scale except for the F♯5, which contains a C♯ note. **FIGURE 1** offers a pumped-up example of a power chord melody played over an Em vamp. Using the 1-3-4 fret-hand fingering (as opposed to 1-3-3) helps guard against unwanted fretted notes in the upper register (along the B string in the first set of chords and the G string in the second set).

TRIADS

Triads (root/third/fifth chords) are another vital component to many of rock's greatest riffs, fills and lead work. Witness Eddie Van Halen's opening riff in "Running with the Devil," Jimi Hendrix's funky concoctions in "Wait Until Tomorrow" and Pete Townshend's signature riffing in

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

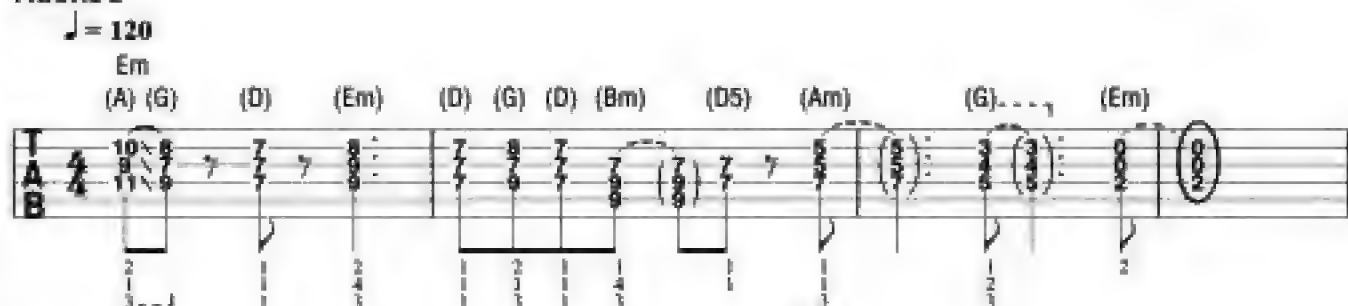


FIGURE 3

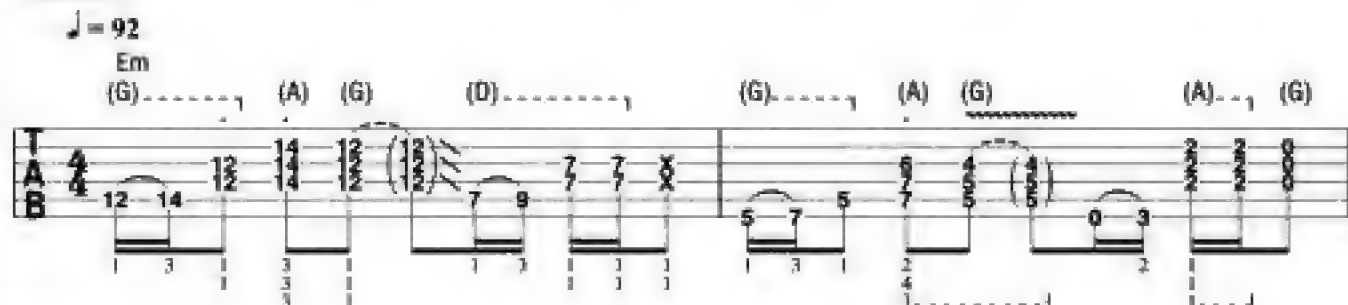


FIGURE 4

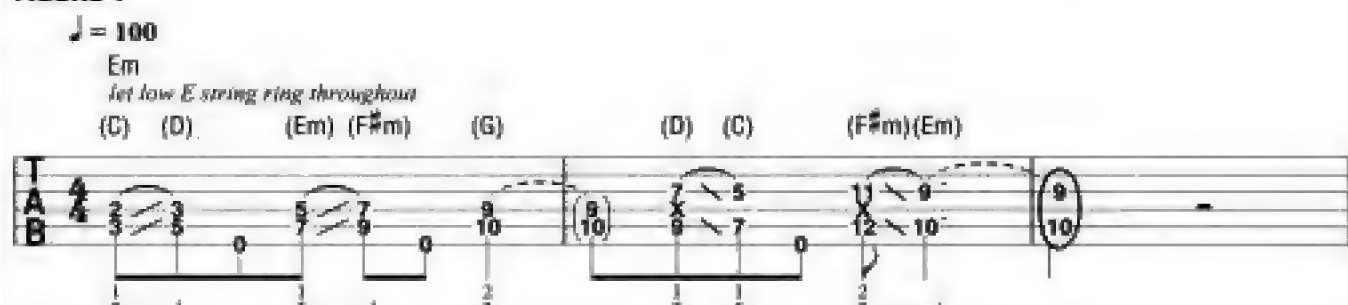


FIGURE 5



"Won't Get Fooled Again." Employing triads in a soloing context can be a hit-and-miss endeavor unless you know the diatonic triads of any given key or scale. The triads that belong to E natural minor are Em, F♯°, G, Am, Bm, C and D. (The triads of E Dorian are Em, F♯m, G, A, Bm, C♯° and D.)

Los Angeles-based guitarist **TOM KOLB** is a veteran session guitarist, Musicians Institute (G.I.T.) instructor, author of instructional books and articles and the featured artist on a variety of instructional videos. Visit tomkolb.com for more.

The cool, but also sometimes confusing, thing about triads is that they can be voiced with the bass notes being either the root (root position), third (first inversion) or fifth (second inversion). This allows for any of the notes in each triad to be the top note (or melody note) in the voicing.

FIGURE 2 uses a variety of triad inversions to create a moody, E natural minor chord melody. Before you jump into the entire example, play through it fretting only the top note in each triad. This will help you to get the melody in your head. **FIGURE 3** is a funky-up chord melody, harmonized from E Dorian, that balances triads with single-note lines.

INTERVALS AND OPEN TRIADS

FIGURE 4 is constructed from intervals, namely thirds and sixths, harmonized from the E natural minor scale. A good way to visualize the thirds in this example is to view them as the bottom two notes (root and third) of root-position triads: C, D, Em, F#m and G. The sixths diads are like inverted or "tipped-over" thirds, with the root on top and the third on the bottom.

FIGURE 5 is a unique blend of sus2 chords (root/fifth/ninth) and triads that are open-voiced (the adjacent notes are more than a fourth apart). Eric Johnson is the Grand Marshall of this style of chord-melody playing (see his work on "Cliffs of Dover," "Manhattan" and "When the Sun Meets the Sky," for some great examples). For the sus2 chords, use your pick to play downstrokes on the low notes, and pluck upward on the higher strings with your second and third fingers. Use your second and fourth fingers to grab the higher strings of the open-triad voicings.

THE SOLO

The solo (**FIGURE 6**) is a 22-bar chord-melody joyride over a driving E-note bass pedal. All the chords and single-note passages are derived from either the E natural minor scale or the E Dorian mode. To cop the desired tone, use the bridge pickup (preferably a humbucker) of a Strat-style guitar; crank the overdrive channel of your amp; dial in liberal amounts of mids and treble, go easy on the bass and use a fair amount of reverb and slap-back echo.

The solo opens with a single-note-reinforced triad passage (bars 1-4). Similar to the examples presented in **FIGURES 2** and **3**, the passage is further fortified with intermittent attacks on the low-E string. Next comes an arpeggiated figure based on Dadd4, Em(add2) and Gsus2 chord voicings (bars 5 and 6). This is followed in bars 7 and 8 by an aggressive attack of open-voiced triads similar in structure to the ones found in **FIGURE 3**.

Bars 9-12 host an extended phrase comprised almost exclusively of E Dorian triad inversions, the sole exception being the final C major triad, which is indigenous to E natural minor. In bar 13 a ringing Em(add9) arpeggio

FIGURE 6

$\text{♩} = 132$

spills into a C5(#11) cluster (bar 14), followed closely in bars 15 and 16 by a series of sliding power chords voiced on the upper string sets. The inclusion of the low-E string serves two purposes: First, it's the focal point of a three-note rhythmic motif that spans both measures; and second, it helps establish the E minor tonality of the passage.

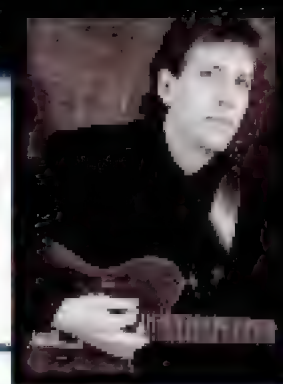


Bar 17 marks the start of the outro. Beginning with a tension-mounting, diad passage fueled by E and B pedal notes (bars 17-20), the section builds to a triadic climax that spans the final two measures.

Hey folks, this is my final column for *Guitar World*. Thanks for reading, and best of luck with your playing. □

SEEING DOUBLE, PART 2

IMPROVISING WITH DIATONIC SIXTHS

ON
DISC

IN LAST MONTH'S column we looked at improvising using thirds, one of the two melodic double-stops most commonly used by guitarists in blues and blues-related styles. This month we'll look at the other staple interval: *sixths*.

A sixth is an inverted third, meaning the lower note of the third is raised one octave, or the higher note is lowered one octave. For example, C-E is a major third, and E-C is a minor sixth. (Major thirds become minor sixths, and minor thirds become major sixths.)

While the narrow note spacing of a third interval evokes two voices singing in close harmony, the more open structure of a sixth has a lighter sound that is more suggestive of the underlying harmony. Freddy King used sixth intervals to great effect in his classic early-Sixties blues instrumentals "Hideaway" and "The Stumble," and they became a trademark of the Memphis branch of Sixties soul, particularly through the work of Stax house guitarist Steve Cropper, whose lyrical sixth-based fills graced hit recordings by Otis Redding ("[Sittin' On] the Dock of the Bay") and Sam & Dave ("Soul Man"), among many others. His approach remains part of the r&b/blues guitar lexicon.

A sixth interval encompasses six adjacent scale degrees. For example, the interval C-A spans C, D, E, F, G and A. Like thirds, any diatonic scale can be harmonized in sixths, but in blues the most common scale is the dominant, or Mixolydian, scale, intervallically spelled 1 2 3 4 5 6 \flat 7. Also, as is the case with thirds, each of the three blues chords (I, IV and V) customarily requires its own scale harmony. **FIGURE 1** shows standard sixth-interval patterns for the I, IV and V chords in the key of C: C7, F7 and G7. Sixth intervals are almost always fretted on nonadjacent strings, with the most-used combinations being first-third or second-fourth. Use your middle finger to fret all notes on the third string and either your first or third finger on the first string. The most effective approach here would be to use *hybrid* (pick and fingers) picking.

The solo in **FIGURE 2** demonstrates sixth intervals played over a 12-bar progression in C. While designed

for a funky, Memphis-style groove, the same phrases can be easily adapted to a shuffle or other groove. The slides and separation of attack

KEITH WYATT teaches blues guitar at Musicians Institute. He performs with the Blasters and has authored videos, books and articles on the blues and guitar.

between the two strings is also typical of r&b-style phrasing; add some extra funk by using your picking finger to snap the first string. \square

FIGURE 1 Mixolydian sixths



FIGURE 2



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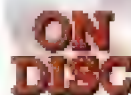


NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

THE FUTURE OF SOUND

TWO THE HARD WAY

FRETTING WITH JUST TWO FINGERS, DJANGO-STYLE



HIS UNIQUE AND astounding guitar talents aside, Django Reinhardt remains mysterious and intriguing for the fact that he could play with great speed and precision using just two fingers of his fretting hand. The Belgian Gypsy guitarist was badly burned in a caravan fire when he was 18, leaving him with a severely damaged, twisted left hand and the use of only its index and middle fingers for fretting. When he recovered from the injury and was able to play at a level above and beyond his previous capabilities, it was received as nothing short of a miracle in the Gypsy community.

When I first started to play Gypsy jazz, I was aware that Django played with just two fingers, and I was curious to discover how he was able to accomplish what he did, and how his licks fell on the fretboard. I learned some of his solos using just two fingers, and I quickly discovered that this approach led me to some very different places. Also, the index and middle fingers are very strong, which has a marked affect on the power I could generate when soloing.

I had always played with all four fret-hand fingers, but I immediately loved the *sound* of the two-finger approach; it also leads you to play things you otherwise probably wouldn't. I think it is comparable to the digital world, where information is composed of zeros and ones. Using just two digits—numbers or fingers—is in some respects less for your brain to think about.

One of the primary stylistic elements that emerge from this approach is that you must travel up and down the fretboard more than usual, as opposed to playing long passages in a single position. This also has an effect on the *tone* of the guitar; if you stay right in the area of fifth position, as in **FIGURE 1**, the tonal quality gets boring rather quickly. But if you stay on the top four strings and travel quickly up the fretboard, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 2**, the tone is more dynamic, which adds character to the line.

FIGURE 3 is a cool two-finger lick that's based on a D minor arpeggio: the index finger initiates most of the position shifts as I barre across multiple strings with either the index or middle finger.

A great many of the licks Django played were built from arpeggios like this, as were the melodies in many of the compositions he wrote and performed.

The lick in **FIGURE 3** ends with the sixth—a B note in the key of D minor—which is indicative of the emphasis placed on the sixth in Django's music. The major sixth is used much more commonly with a minor chord in Gypsy jazz than is the flatted, or minor, seventh, which would be C in the key of D minor. You'll hear minor sixth chords,

JOHN JORGENSEN is one of today's most respected and versatile guitarists. He is well known for his work with Emmylou Harris in the Desert Rose Band, his Tele-melting collaboration with Will Ray and Jerry Donahue in the Hellocasters, his six years working with Elton John and, in recent years, his mastery of "gypsy jazz" and the music of jazz guitar icon Django Reinhardt.

such as Am6, much more commonly in this style than minor seventh chords like Am7; **FIGURE 4** details stock voicings of both chords.

FIGURE 5 illustrates an Am6 arpeggio, comprised of the notes A, C, E and F#. What's cool about this arpeggio is that you can play it over either Am6 or D9 because the same group of notes works equally well over both tonalities.

Next month, I'll be back with more insight into Django's two-finger fretting style.

FIGURE 1 Swing Feel ($\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$)



FIGURE 2

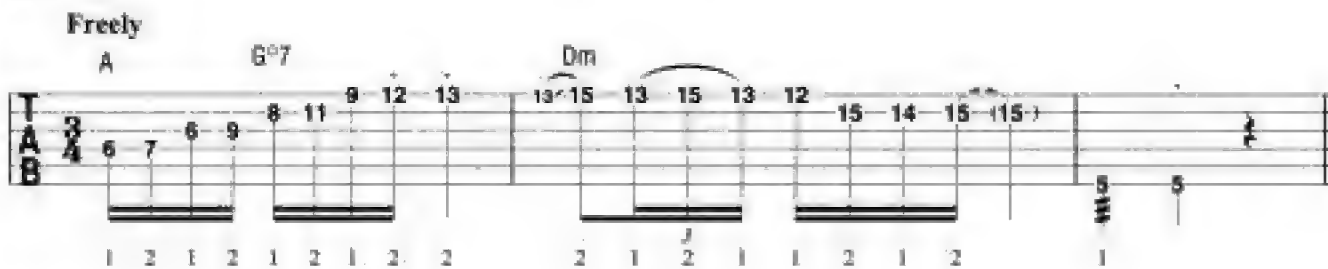


FIGURE 3

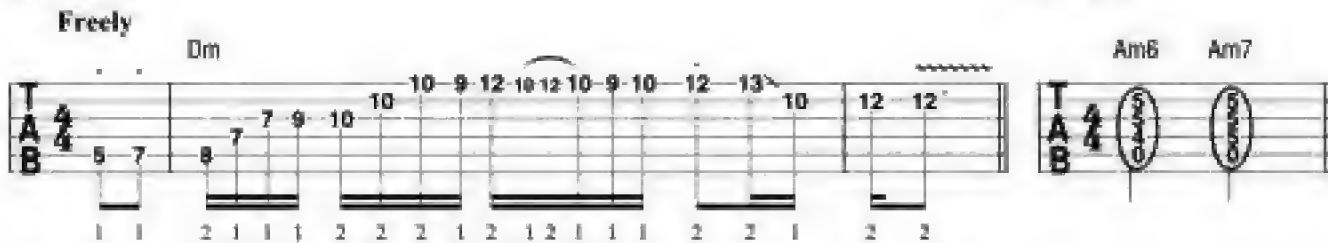


FIGURE 4

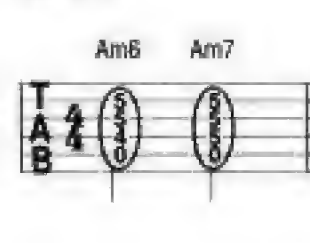


FIGURE 5



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"Interstate Love Song" - Stone Temple Pilots



RV-5



DS-2



AC-3

"Inside The Fire" - Disturbed



FS-FU



DD-7

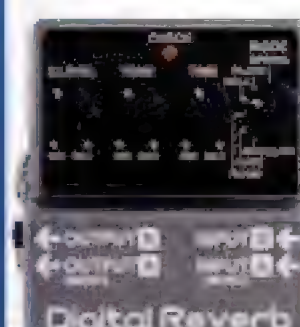


AW-3



ML-2

"Achilles Last Stand" - Led Zeppelin



RV-5



PH-3



GE-7



DN-2

"Hole In The Sky" - Black Sabbath



DS-1



GE-7

"Sorry" - Buckcherry



DS-1



AC-3

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"ACHILLES LAST STAND" LED ZEPPELIN

As heard on **PRESENCE** (SWAN SONG)

Words and Music by **Jimmy Page and Robert Plant** * Transcribed by **Dale Turner**

Chord diagrams for the following chords: F#m(addb6), Em9, F#m7add4, F#m/E, Em, D6/E, D/E, D6/E, E5add9, E5, Esus2, C, D6/C, E5, C5.

*fret 6 w/thumb

*Guitarist Jimmy Page randomly substitutes these two chords for one another throughout the song's six verses, specifically in the repetitions of bars 13, 17, 21, 25, 33, 37, 41 and 45.

A Intro (0:00)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 146

w/half-time feel

*Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/light dist. and slow phaser)

end half-time feel

Intro guitar notation for Gtr. 1 and 2. Chords: F#m(addb6), Em9, F#m7add4. Includes fret numbers and a "let ring" instruction.

*Both gtrs. gradually fade in; repeat played simile.

**Fret 6 w/thumb

Intro

Intro guitar notation for Gtr. 1 and 2. Chords: F#m/E, Em, N.C., D6/E. Includes fret numbers and a "Rhy. Fig. 1" instruction.

*Elec. Bass (w/pick)
Bass Fig. 1

Substitute Bass Fill 1 1st time (see bar 12)

*8-string bass; all pitches are doubled one octave higher by additional strings.

B 1st, 3rd and 5th Verses (0:45, 2:24, 5:15)

1. It was an April morning when they told us we
3. Into the sun and the South the North bathed we at
5. Days flew by and you and I bathed

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 on 3rd and 5th verses (see below)
Gtrs. 3 and 4 play Fills 1a and 1b on 5th verse (see bar 58)
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 3 on 5th verse (see below)

Verse guitar notation for Gtr. 1 and 2. Chords: F#m/E, Em. Includes fret numbers and a "Rhy. Fig. 1" instruction.

Fill 3 (5:15) (end of solo)

Gtr. 5 (w/dist.) F#m/E Em

Fill 3 guitar notation for Gtr. 5. Includes fret numbers and a "P.M." instruction.

Rhy. Fig. 2 (2:24, 5:15)

Gtr. 1 (w/dist.) F#m/E Em

Rhy. Fig. 2 guitar notation for Gtr. 1. Includes fret numbers and a "D/E" instruction.

"ACHILLES LAST STAND"

should go birds had flown
last the eternal summer's glow
in eternal

D/E

let ring

And as I turned to you you smiled at me in
As shackles of commitment tell our
As far away and distant

F#m/E Em

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 three times (see prev. page)

13 Gtr. 2

Bass

end Bass Fig. 2 Bass repeats Bass Fig. 2 three times

How could we say no
pieces could on the ground
mutual child did grow

D/E

Whoe the fun to have to
Whoe to ride the wind
Whoe the sweet refrain

F#m/E Em

17 Gtr. 2

live the tread the dreams we always had the
to tread the air above the din
that soothes the soul and calms the pain

D/E

Whoe the songs
Whoe to laugh
Oh Albion

F#m/E Em

21

to sing aloud remains when we with at last eyes return we fought again the crowd yeah
Sleeping now to rise again

D/E

24

(1:12, 2:50, 5:41)

F#m/E Em

N.C.

D/E

27

Substitute Riff C on 5th verse (see below)
Riff B

Gtrs. 3 and 4 (w/dist. and fast phaser)
(3rd verse only)

end Riff B

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)

*When melody splits, Gtr. 3 plays lower note and Gtr. 4 plays higher note.

Riff C (5:41)

Gtr. 3 (w/dist. and phaser)

F#m/E Em

P.M.

Gtr. 4 (w/dist. and phaser)

P.M.

"ACHILLES LAST STAND"

(1:57)

Gtr. 1 E5

50 Rhy. Fig. 3a

C5

end Rhy. Fig. 3a

Gtr. 3 (w/dist. and fast phaser)

Riff A2

Gtr. 4 (w/dist. and fast phaser)

Riff A1

N.C.(Em)

(Cadd9#11)

Gtr. 2 Rhy. Fig. 3b

let ring next 8 bars

end Rhy. Fig. 3b

Bass

E5

C5

Gtr. 1 repeats Rhy. Fig. 3a

Gtr. 3

end Riff A2

Gtr. 4

end Riff A1

(Em)

(Cadd9#11)

Gtr. 2

Bass

Riff D (5:54)

Gtr. 3 (w/dist. and slow phaser)

F#m/E Em

D6/E

(play 4 times)

Gtr. 4 (w/dist. and slow phaser)

"ACHILLES LAST STAND"

E5 (Em)
Gtr. 5 1/2

77 14 (14) 12 14 (14) (14) 12 (12) (12) 12 14 14 (14) 12 15 (15) (15) 13 (13) 12 13 12

C5 (Cadd9#11)

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 5 simile

(4:09)
Slower ♩ = 97 (♩. = ♩)

Gtr. 5 **E5add9 E5 E5add9 E5 E5add9 E5 E5add9 E5**

81 12 14 14 (14) (14) 14 12 14 14 (14) (14) 12 14 14 (14) (14) 14 12 14

Cadd#4 C Cadd#4 C Cadd#4 C Cadd#4 C

Gtrs. 1 and 2 Rhy. Fig. 4

Bass Bass Fig. 6

Gtr. 5 **Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5 Eadd9 E5**

83 12 13 15 13 12 13 12 14 12 12 13 12 12 12 12 13 15 12 14 15 15 14 12 14 (14) 12 15 15 12 13 12 12 14 12 14 14

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 6

(4:22)
Original Tempo ♩ = 148 (♩. = ♩.)

E5 N.C.(Em)

Gtr. 5 Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 3a and 3b four times simile (see bar 50)

85 12 14 12 14 14 12 14 16 15 17 (17) 17 17 17 12

C5 (Cadd9#11)

Bass Bass Fig. 7

end Bass Fig. 7

E5 N.C.(Em)

Gtr. 5

89 12 (12) 15 (15) 15 15 14 12 14 (14) 12 14 12 12 14 12 15 (15) 15 13 14

C5 (Cadd9#11)

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 7 three times simile

E5 N.C.(Em)

Gtr. 5

93 13 12 12 12 (12) 12 12 15 (15) 12 14 15 14 12 14 12 14 15 17 19 20 (20) 20 19 17

C5 (Cadd9#11)

* Played behind the beat

The Pedals That Make The Tone

(4:49)
Slower ♩ = 97 (♩. = ♩)

(5:01)
Original Tempo ♩ = 146 (♩ = ♩.)

107

C5 (Cadd9#11) E5 (Em) C5 (Cadd9#11)

go back to 106 P.M.

17 (17) 15 (15) 17 15 16 14 14 (14) 12 (12) 14 (14) 12 14 10 10

earth
*(I know the way know the way know the way know the way)
E5 C5

Bass plays Bass Fig. 7 four times simile (see bar 85)

*Secondary vocal sung third and fourth times only.

****Gtr. 3 plays higher notes, Gtr. 4 plays lower notes.**

Slower ♩ = 97 (♩. = ♩)

Em	Esus2	Em	Esus2	Em	Esus2	Em	Esus2	Em	D6	C	D6/C	C	D6/C	C	D6/C	C	D6/C	C	D6
----	-------	----	-------	----	-------	----	-------	----	----	---	------	---	------	---	------	---	------	---	----

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 (see bar 101)

*Gtr. 3 (w/dist. and fast phaser)

(2nd time only)

117

Ger. 4 (w/dist. and fast phaser)
(2nd time only)

*doubled by 12-string elec. w/light dist.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 8 (see bar 10!)

(7:00)

Original Tempo ♩ = 146 (♩ = ♩.)

(w/half-time feel)

(end half-time feel)

On

E5

N.C.(Em)

C5
(C#add9#11)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 3a and 3b (see bar 50)

Qtr. 7 (w/dist.)

w/slide

119

F#m/E Em

2 p

N.C.

D&E

1.

2

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 7)

124

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)

I 5th Interlude (7:27)

Ah

Ah

At

A1

N.C.(Em)

(D/E)

Gtrs. 7 and 8 (1st time only)

129

(play 5 times simile)

*Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.

(repeat previous bar)

P.M. P.M.

Bass

*Two str. arr. for one (next four bars)

*Two gtrs. arr. for one (next four bars)

"ACHILLES LAST STAND"

(7:50)
Ah
N.C.(Em)
133 Gtr. 1

C5 E5

N.C.(Em)
Gtr. 2

(Cadd9#11)
let ring

(Em)

Bass
Bass Fig. 9

(8:12)
Ah
E5
N.C.(Em)
139 Gtr. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 3a and 3b twice similar (see bar 50)
Gtr. 3 (w/fast phaser)

C5 C5 (Cadd9#11)

(Cadd9#11)
let ring

Gtr. 4 (w/fast phaser)

Bass Fig. 10

J 6th Interlude (8:25)

Slower ♩ = 97 (♩. = ♩)

Em C

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 four times (see bar 101)

*Gtr. 7 w/slide

let ring

Gtr. 3
145

Gtr. 4

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 10 similar

*Gtr. 8 w/slide

Bass plays Bass Fig. 8 four times (see bar 101)

*Both gtrs. w/random pausing left to right

Em C Em C

151

let ring

let ring

let ring

"ACHILLES LAST STAND"

(8:51)

Original Tempo ♩ = 146 (♩ = ♩.)

Oh the

Em C F#m/E Em N.C. D6/E

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 7)

155 steady gliss

let ring

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice simile (see bar 7)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 mighty arms of Atlas hold the heavens from the earth

F#m/E Em N.C. D6/E

161

K 7th Interlude (9:04)

Oh (Ah) Oh (Ah) Oh (Ah) Oh (Ah)

N.C.(Em) N.C. D6/E

Gtrs. 1 and 2

165 P.M. P.M. P.M. (play 4 times simile)

Bass

*Primary vocal sung first time only

(9:30) Whew

F#m/E Em N.C. D6/E F#m/E Em

169

L Outro (half-time feel) (9:43)

F#m(add6) Em9

*Gtr. 6 (elec. 12-string w/dist. and slow phaser)

repeat and fade

174

Gtrs. 1 and 2

*doubled

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"HOLE IN THE SKY" BLACK SABBATH

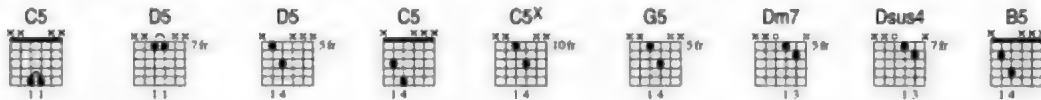
As heard on **SABOTAGE** (WARNER BROS.)

Words and Music by Frank Iommi, William Ward, Terence Butler and John Osbourne ★ Transcribed by Jeff Perrin

All guitars are tuned down one and one half steps (low to high: C# F# B E G# C#).

Bass tuning (low to high: C# F# B E).

All music sounds one and one half steps lower than written (key of F# minor).



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 114 w/shuffle feel (♩ = ♩)

N.C.(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 C5

*Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 1

1

*two gtrs. arr. for one

Bass (w/light dist.)

Bass Fig. 1

let ring...

let ring...

let ring...

let ring...

end Bass Fig. 1

B (0:25, 0:58)

(A5) C5

G5

D5

(A5) C5

G5

D5

Rhy. Fig. 2

Gtr. 1

(repeat previous two bars)

2

5

*pull both strings in toward palm

Bass

Bass Fill 1

Substitute Bass Fill 1 second time

C 1st and 2nd Verses (0:42, 1:15)

1. I'm looking through a hole in the sky
2. I'm living in a room without any view

I'm seeing nowhere through the eyes of a lie due
I'm living free because the rent's never due

N.C.(A5)

C5

D5

(A5)

D5

C5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

9

Bass

let ring...

let ring...

let ring...

let ring...

I'm getting closer to the end of the line
The synonyms of all the things that I've said

I'm living easy where the sun doesn't shine
are just the riddles that are built in my head

1st time, go back to B

N.C.(A5)

C5

D5

(A5)

D5

C5

13 (repeat previous four bars)

4

D Chorus (1:32, 2:22)

Hole in the sky
take me to heaven
Window in time

through it I fly

2nd time, skip ahead to G Guitar Solo

17 Gtr. 1 Dm7 (play 3 times) Dm7 C5 B5 fdbk. pitch: Bb

Bass (play 3 times)

E (1:49)

N.C.(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 C5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

22 Bass let ring... let ring... let ring... let ring...

F 3rd Verse (2:06)

go back to D Chorus

I've seen the stars a-disappear in the sun
And even though I'm sitting waiting for Mars

The shooting's easy if you've got the right gun
I don't believe there's any future in cause

N.C.(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 C5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

26 Bass let ring... let ring... let ring... let ring...

G Guitar Solo (2:40)

Yeah

N.C.(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 C5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)

30 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) 1/2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

34 (A5) C5 D5 (A5) D5 C5

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H 4th Verse (3:13)

I've seen the Western world go down in the East
but now we're living on the profits of crime

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 CS

Gr. 1 plays *Rhv. Fig. 1* twice (see bar 1)

1 (129)

(A5) C5 G5 D5 (A5) C5 G5 D5

Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times (see bar 5)

J Outre (3:46)

N.C.(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

D5 C5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

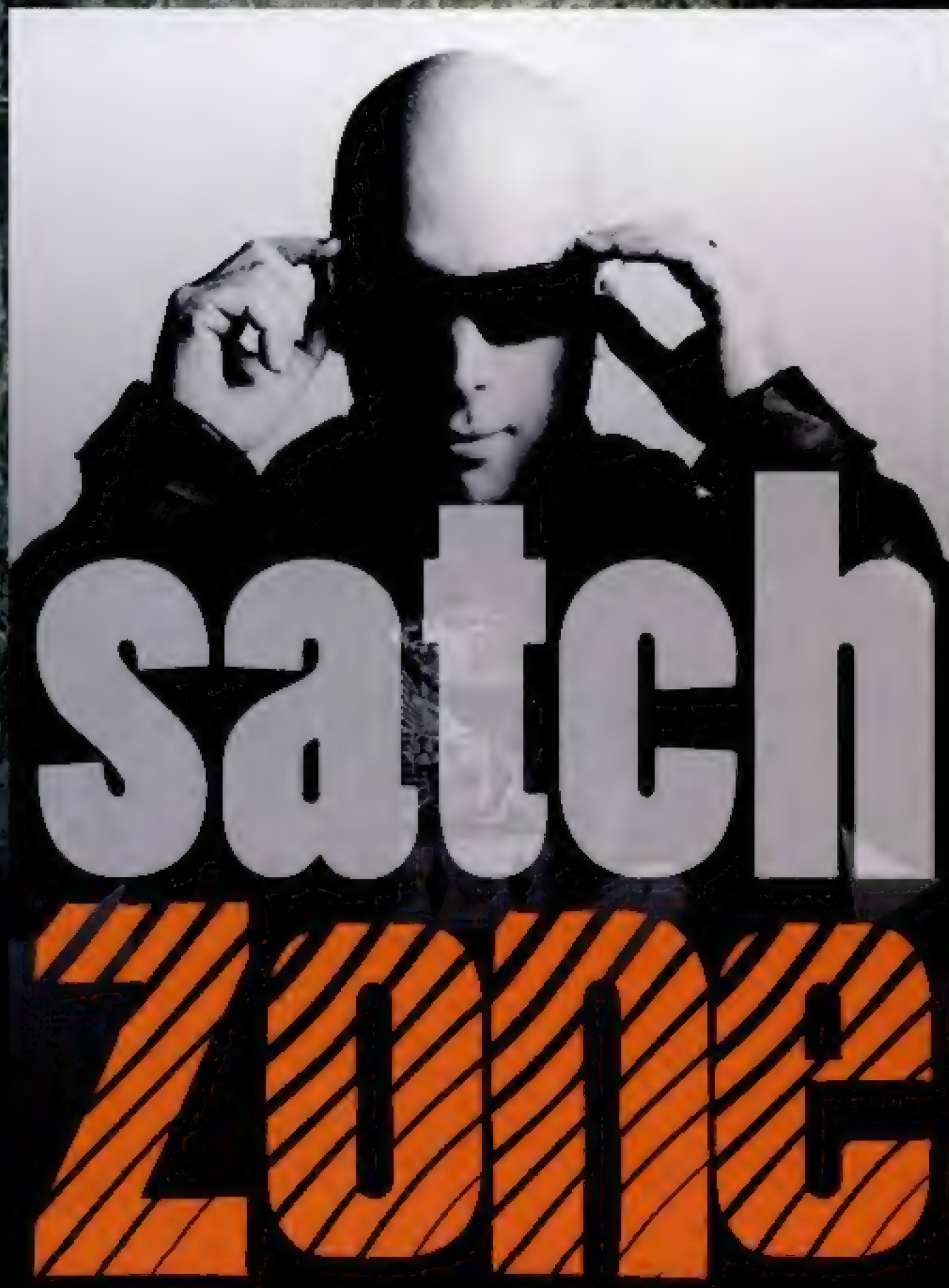
(A5)

C5 D5 (A5)

segue to "Don't Start (Too Late)"

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"INTERSTATE LOVE SONG" STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

As heard on **PURPLE** (ATLANTIC)

Music by **R. DeLeo** * Words by **S. Weiland** * Transcribed by **Patrick Mabry and Michael DuClos**



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 80

C#m7

E

Asus2

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/light dist. and slap-back echo)

w/ride

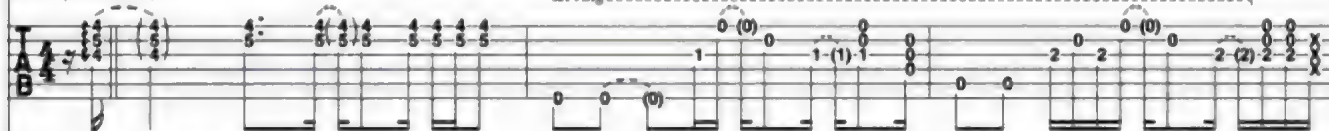
(slight vib.)

(slight vib.)



Gtr. 1 (*clean elec.)

let ring

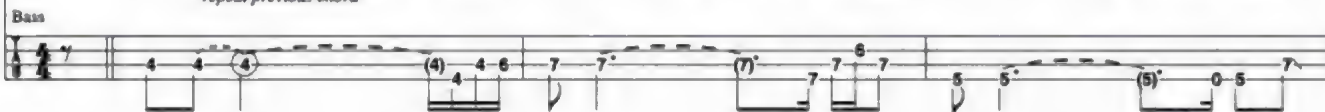


*distorted gtr. w/volume knob rolled back

Gtr. 3 (acous.)



*repeat previous chord



G#sus4

G#

A

E

(slight vib.)

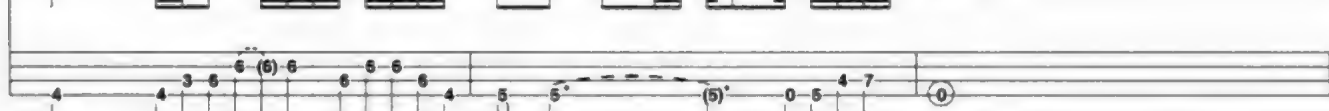
grad. slide

(Gtr. 2 out)



(vol. swell)

(Gtr. 3 out)



"INTERSTATE LOVE SONG"

B (0:17, 1:48)

N.C. E F#m/E E

*Gr. 1 (w/dist.)

let ring.

*doubled

Bass

C Verses (0:34, 0:53, 2:04)

1. Waitin' on a Sunday afternoon for what I read between the lines
 2. Feelin' like a hand in rusted shame So do you laugh or does it cry
 3. Breathin' is the hardest thing to do with all I've said and all that's dead

C#m7 G#m/B C#m/B

P.M. P.M. P.M.

for you

A#m7b5 Asus2 E F#m/E E

let ring.

3rd time, skip ahead to [E]

Your lies
 Reply
 You lied

E F#m/E E N.C. E

let ring.

D Chorus (1:20, 2:28)

Leavin' on a southern train only
 C#m E

F#m/E E

let ring.

let ring throughout

"INTERSTATE LOVE SONG"

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yesterday Asus2 you lied G#sus4 G# Promises A of what I

22

seemed to be only watched the time go

25

by All of these (1.) things you said to me (2.) things I said to you

G#sus4 G# A E

27

1st time, go back to [B]
2nd time, skip ahead to [F] Outro

[E] (2:17)

go back to [D] Chorus

Goodbye

E F#m/E E let ring... Asus2 E F#m/E E let ring... E F#m/E E

30

[F] Outro (2:56)

N.C. E F#m/E E

34

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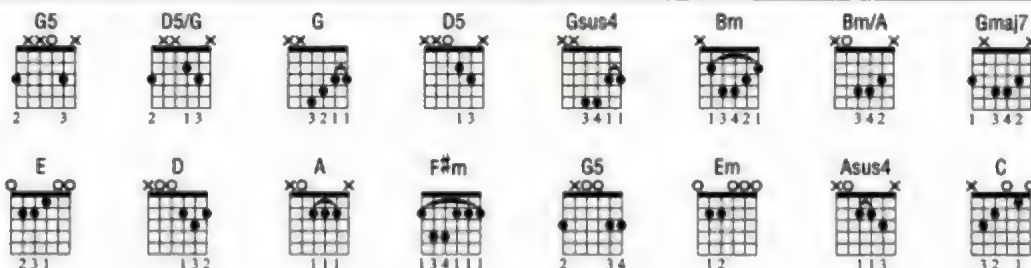
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"SORRY" BUCKCHERRY

As heard on 15 (ELEVEN SEVEN MUSIC)

Music by Josh Todd, Keith Nelson and Marti Fredericksen • Words by Josh Todd and Marti Fredericksen • Transcribed by Jeff Perrin



A Intro (0:00)

Slowly ♩ = 64

G5 D5/G G5 D5/G

B Verses (0:07, 1:21)

1. Oh I had a lot to say
(2.) I think I'm to blame

let ring throughout

1

Gtr. 2 (clean elec.)

Gtr. 1 (acous.)
w/pick and fingers
let ring throughout

Rhy. Fill 1

Bass

Substitute Bass Fill 1 second time (see bar 5)
(play simile on 2nd Verse)

Was thinking It's harder on my time away to get through the days I missed you and things weren't the same
You get older and blame turns to shame

D5 Gsus4 G D5 G

4

Bass Fill 1

C Pre-chorus (0:29, 1:43)

'Cause everything inside it never comes out right And when I see you cry

D5 Bm Bm/A Gmaj7

D 1st and 2nd Choruses (0:44, 1:57)

it makes me want to die I'm sorry I'm bad I'm sorry I'm blue I'm sorry 'bout

Bm Bm/A E D A

(w/dist.) P.M. Rhy. Fig. 1a

*Chord in parenthesis played second time only **repeat previous chord

Rhy. Fig. 1 w/pick

Bass Fig. 1

all the things I said to you and I know I can't take it back I love how you kiss

Bm F#m G5 Em Asus4 A

end Rhy. Fig. 1a

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1

2nd Chorus, skip ahead to [E] Bridge

I love all your sounds and baby the way you make my world go 'round and I just wanted to say I'm sorry

D A Bm F#m G5 Em Asus4 A

Gr. 1 repeats Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 13)
Gr. 2 repeats Rhy. Fig. 1a (see bar 13)

17 Bass

"SORRY"

E (1:13)

go back to **B** 2nd Verse

2. This time

GSUS4

G

D5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see bar 3)

Gtr. 2 (dist. off)

21

Bass

F Bridge (2:26)

Every single day I think about how we came all this way The sleepless nights and the tears

Bm

D

A

E

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

23

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

you cried It's never too late to make it right Oh yeah sorry I'm sorry I'm bad

Bm

A5

C

Oh

Asus4

sorry

A

26

G 3rd Chorus (2:47)

I'm sorry I'm blue I'm sorry 'bout all the things I said to you and I know

I can't take it back

I love how you

D

A

Bm

F#m

G5

Em

Asus4

A

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 13)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1a three times simile (see bar 13)

Gtr. 3

29

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 13)

kiss I love all your sounds and baby the way you make my world go 'round and I just

D A Bm F#m G5

33

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass

wanted to say I'm sorry

Em Asus4 A D A

35

I'm sorry baby I'm sorry baby yeah I'm sorry

Bm F#m G5 Em A5

38

Gtrs. 1 and 2

H Outro (3:31)

G5 D5/G G5 D5/G G5

Gtr. 1
w/pick and fingers
let ring throughout

41



"INSIDE THE FIRE" DISTURBED

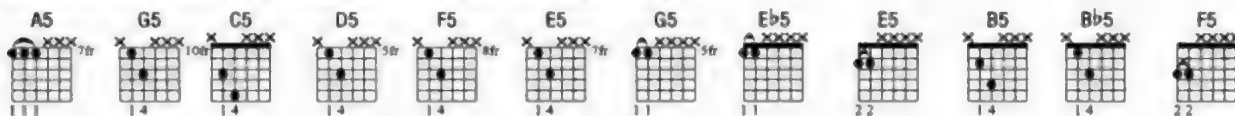
As heard on **INDESTRUCTIBLE (REPRISE)**

Words and Music by David Draiman, Dan Donegan and Mike Wengren * Transcribed by Jeff Perrin

Guitars are in drop-D tuning down one whole step (low to high, C G C F A D).

5-string Bass tuning, low to high: A D G C F.

All music sounds in the key of G minor, one whole step lower than written.



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 94

N.C.(A5)

A5

Riff A continues next three and one half bars
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist. and filter effect)

1

TAB

(synth arr. for bass)
Riff A

(repeat prev. bar)

Bass

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.)

*P.M.

*Emulate post-production "stutter" effect w/P.M.

B (0:15, 1:14)

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha (1st time)

Ooh (2nd time)

5

(A5)

(disregard repeat before 2nd Verse)

(disregard repeat before 2nd Verse)

*repeat previous chord

Bass Fig. 1

(disregard repeat before 2nd Verse)

C Verses (0:26, 1:19)

1. Devin won't go to heaven She's just another lost soul about to be mine again
2. Sever now and forever You're just another lost soul about to be mine again

Gtrs. 1 and 2

9

P.M.

*Gtr. 1 only on 2nd Verse

Bass

Substitute Bass Fill 1 on 2nd Verse (see next page)

Bass Fig. 2

Leave her We will receive her It is beyond your control Will you ever meet again
See her You'll never free her You must surrender it all if you'd like to meet again

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

11

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 9)

Devin	one of eleven	who had been rendered unwhole	as a little	child	She was
Fire	for your desire	as she begins to turn cold	for the final	time	You will

13

10 7 7 7 7 8 7 7 7 7 7 10 7 7 10 7 7 7 8 7 7 10 7 8 7 8

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)

taken	and then forsaken	You will remember	it	all	let it fill	your	mind	again
shiver	'til you deliver	You will remember	it	all	let it fill	your	mind	again

2

D Pre-chorus (0:46, 1:00)

Devin	lies	beyond	this	portal	Take	the	word	of	one	immortal
(F5)	(D5)	(G5)	(E5)	(F5)	(D5)	(G5)	(E5)	(F5)	(D5)	(G5)

[illegible]

1 1 1 3 3 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 1 1 1 3 3 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 0 8 8 8 5 5 5 10 10 10 7 7 7 8 8 8 5 5 5 10 7

E Chorus (0:54, 1:47, 2:57)

	Give	your	soul	to	me		for	eternity		
A5	End	your	grief	with	me	A5	There's	another	C5	D5
		G5	C5	D5	F5					C5

[illegible]

Bass Fill 1 (1:19)
(A5)



"INSIDE THE FIRE"

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2nd time on 1st Chorus, go back to [B] (no repeat)
2nd time on 2nd Chorus, continue to [F]
2nd time on 3rd Chorus, skip ahead to [I]

Release your life to begin another time with her
Release your life to begin another time with her

A5 G5 C5 D5 F5

E5 w/wah P.M. G5

22

[F] (2:08)

A5 Eb5 E5 Eb5 B5 C5 Bb5 F5

[G] Guitar Solo (2:13)

A5 Eb5 E5 Eb5

Gtr. 3 (w/filter effect)

(filter effect off)

24

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

B5 C5 Bb5 F5 A5 Eb5 E5 Eb5 B5 D5

27

pitch: F

pitch: E

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 3

* Substitute bottom notes in bar 33

A5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 repeat Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 26)
Gtr. 3

Eb5 E5 Eb5

30

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 26)

31 **B5** **C5** **Bb5** **F5**

3 0 0 0 0 0 5 5 0 0 0 3 3 0 0 8 8 0 0 7 7 0 0 3 0 0 10 10 8

32 **A5** **Eb5** **E5** **Eb5**

10 8 10 8 12 10 8 10 12 8 10 8 10 12 8 10 8 10 12 8 10 8 10 12 8 10

33 **B5** **Take D5** **me** **away** **yeah**

15 (15) 15 15 (15) 15 15 (15) 15 15 (15) 20 (20) 20 20

H Solo Tag (2:33)

N.C.
Gtr. 4 (elec. w/dist.)
(both notes vib. w/bar)

34 15 (15) 15 (15)

Gtr. 3

Gtrs. 1 and 2
Riff B

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 13 10 13 11 13 11 14 11

Bass

Bass Fig. 4

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 11 8 11 9 11 9 12 9

(w/slight fdbk.)

36 15 (15) 15 (15)

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 13 10 13 11 13 10 13 10

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 11 8 11 9 11 8 11 8

"INSIDE THE FIRE"

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Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Riff B (see bar 34)

Gtr. 3

38

(14)

0

0

w/bar

slack

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 34)

Gtr. 3

40

0

0

-1 1/2

Gtrs. 1 and 2

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 13 10 13 11 13 11 14 11

Bass

13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10 0 13 12 10 12 10 12 10 13 12 0 10 12 10 12 10

go back to Chorus

Gtr. 3

42

5 16 14 16 14 17 14 17 16 17 16 19 16 19 17 17 17

Gtrs. 1 and 2

14 13 14 13 16 13 16 14 16 14 17 14 17 20 20 20

(3:17)

N.C.(A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

43

10 7 7 7 7 8 7 7 7 7 7 10 7 7 10 7 7 7 7 8 7 7 7 7 10 7 8 7 8

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)

(2nd time) Ooh

Outro (3:28)

Devlin
taken
(A5)

one of eleven
and then forsaken

who had been rendered unwhole as a little child She was
You will remember it all let it fill your mind again

Gtrs. 1 and 2

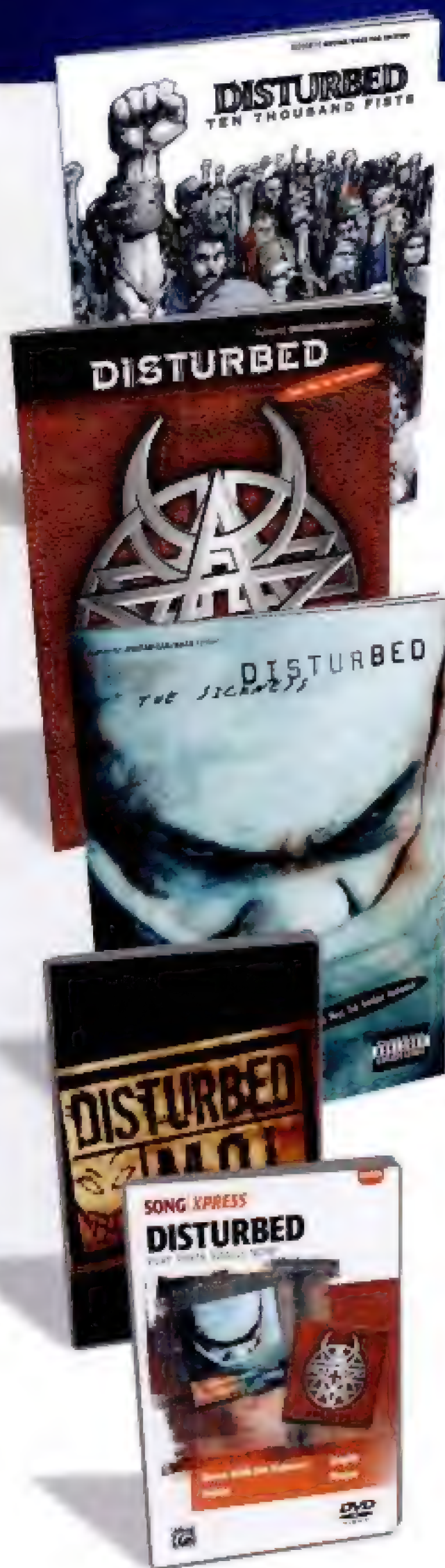
45

10 7 7 7 7 8 7 7 7 7 7 10 7 7 10 7 7 7 7 10 7 8 7 8

Bass

3 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 0 3 0 0 2 0 0 3 0 1 0 1

A5



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BY CHRIS GILL

THE HOT-RODDED Marshall phenomenon that started in the Eighties can be attributed mainly to two players: Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads. Ironically, Eddie's original amp wasn't modified at all, while the modifications to Randy's amps were long rumored but never confirmed. Because Randy's amps were returned to his family and locked up in a vault after his death in 1982, details of the modifications remained a mystery until recently.

Working with the assistance of Randy's mother Delores and brother Kelle, Marshall finally gained access to Rhoads' legendary white Marshall amp head. Marshall investigated every minute detail, including the cascaded input modification that was performed at the Marshall factory in 1980 when Rhoads custom-ordered two white Marshall stacks. As a result Marshall just released the limited-edition 1959RR Randy Rhoads Signature Series Super Lead 100-Watt head, an exact duplicate of the 1980 Marshall JMP 1959 Super Lead MKII 100-watt head that Randy used onstage with Ozzy and on the recordings of *Blizzard of Ozz* and *Diary of a Madman*.

FEATURES

ALTHOUGH MARSHALL HAD been making amps with master volume controls since 1975, Rhoads preferred the original Non-Master 100-watt 1959 Super Lead model with four inputs, which Marshall made until 1981, when it was replaced by the 1959 JCM800. The 1959RR is a two-channel 100-watt head powered by a quartet of EL34 tubes (just like Ran-

dy's U.K.-built original) with volume controls for each channel and a single set of presence, treble, mid and bass controls shared by both channels.

The modification cascades both halves of the first ECC83 tube (a.k.a., 12AX7) in the preamp circuit, feeding the output from the first stage into the second stage's input instead of using



**MARSHALL 1959RR
RANDY RHOADS
SIGNATURE GUITAR
AMPLIFIER**

LIST PRICE: \$4,000.00

MANUFACTURER:
Marshall Amplification,
marshallamps.com

TYPE: All-tube two-
channel amp

OUTPUT: 100 watts RMS

TUBE COMPLEMENT:
Four EL34 power, three
ECC83 preamp

CHANNELS: Two (no
switching feature)

CONTROLS: Presence,
bass, middle, treble,
volume I, volume II

INPUTS: Four: High
Sensitivity I, Low
Sensitivity I, High
Sensitivity II, Low
Sensitivity II

REAR PANEL: Two
speaker outputs, output
impedance selector,
mains voltage selector

CABINETS

MODEL NUMBERS:
1960AWEG (angled
front), 1960BWEG
(straight front)

LIST PRICES: \$1,299.00

SPEAKERS: Four
Celestion G12-75

INPUTS: Mono (16 or 4
ohms), stereo (8 ohms
per side), switchable

CONSTRUCTION: 15mm
birch ply

POWER HANDLING:
300 watts mono

each half separately as an input buffer for each channel. This allows the volume I knob to function like a master volume while the volume II knob operates like gain control when a guitar is plugged into the channel II inputs, producing much more preamp gain and saturated distortion than a stock 1959 Super Lead head. If you prefer the stock Super Lead sound, plug into the channel I inputs, which aren't affected by the cascade modification.

Like an original 1959 Super Lead head, the 1959RR's rear panel is about as sparse as it gets. There are two speaker output jacks, an output impedance selector switch with 4-, 8- and 16-ohm settings and a mains selector switch that lets you select 120 volts (U.S.) or 220 volts (U.K., Europe) input voltage.

With its white "elephant" vinyl covering, black Marshall logo, white piping and black corner protectors, the 1959RR looks almost identical to Randy's original amp as well. The only details missing are the ring from a can of Coke that Randy set on the amp, a few stray pieces of duct tape and general wear and tear.

PERFORMANCE

RANDY'S ORIGINAL MARSHALL 4x12 cabinets were loaded with 100-watt Altec Lansing 417-8H speakers, which are no longer made and are very hard to find. Instead, I tested the 1959RR through a Marshall 4x12 loaded with G12T75 speakers, which provides similar resistance to speaker distortion and retains tight, focused sound at high volume levels. I also broke out my original 1981 MXR Distortion+ and vintage Seventies Cry Baby wah pedal to duplicate

**ON
DISC**

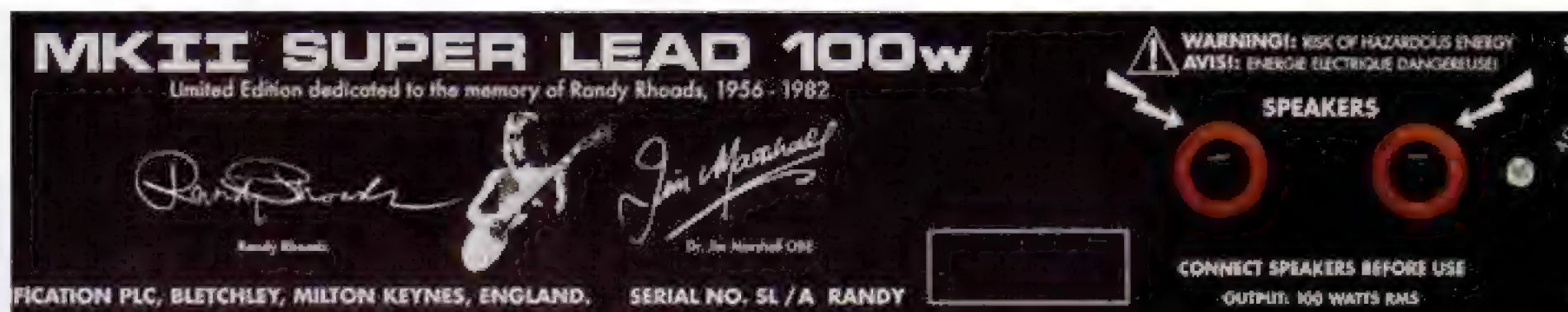
CHECK

RIVERA VENUS 6 156 SAMSON G-TRACK USB MIC 158 VHT SIG-X AMP 160 FERNANDES TREMOR DELUXE BASS 162 FISHMAN AFX PEDALS 164



With only channel volume controls and no master volume to tame this beast, the 1959RR is loud.

The cascade modification affects the Channel II inputs.



the primary tone-shaping elements of Randy's custom pedal board. Test guitars included a Les Paul Custom with stock Gibson humbuckers and a Seventies Ibanez Rocket Roll Sr. with vintage DiMarzio Super Distortion humbuckers.

Like most non-master 100-watt Marshalls, the 1959RR head is very loud, even at the lowest possible volume setting. Channel II is especially over the top, and by the time you dial in the sweet spot, around 6, it's loud enough to kill small birds, the elderly and sensitive squirrels. Unless you're playing the Forum, you'll need an attenuator like the THD Hot Plate to enjoy this amp at more-civilized volume levels.

I achieved the most accurate duplications of Randy's *Blizzard* rhythm tones on channel II with both volume

controls dialed to 6, the bass turned down, the midrange cranked up and the treble and presence tweaked about midway to provide the right amount of sizzle. The outstanding manual, written by GW contributor Nick Bowcott, shows a similar setting that Randy apparently preferred.

Randy's *Diary* lead tones emerged both through channel I using a combination of the Distortion+ and wah pedals to duplicate his boxy midrange and through channel II using just the wah. The cascaded gain mod produces lively "crushed glass" distortion with sparkling treble harmonics—an elusive but highly desirable classic Marshall tone. The Distortion+ really isn't necessary on the channel II inputs as the cascade mod provides all the gain and gnarly crunch you could want for classic Eighties metal tones.

“UNLESS YOU'RE PLAYING THE FORUM, YOU'LL NEED AN ATTENUATOR TO ENJOY THIS AMP AT MORE-CIVILIZED VOLUME LEVELS.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

LIKE MARSHALL'S OTHER signature series amps, the 1959RR isn't cheap, but in this day and age handwired quality and premium vintage-style parts don't come cheap. If you're a Randy Rhoads fan and want to duplicate his tone to the closest detail, the 1959RR is an essential purchase (sorry we can't help you with those Altec speakers, though). The amp is also great for anyone who can afford the big bucks and wants an amp that can deliver lively, "Plexi"-style crunch and aggressive Eighties Marshall crush in the same package. 🌟

PRO	CON
AUTHENTIC RANDY RHOADS TONE; HIGH-GAIN; CASCADE MOD; COLLECTIBLE	TOO LOUD FOR MOST APPLICATIONS; NO CHANNEL SWITCHING; EXPENSIVE

BRED FOR SHRED

Washburn USA Custom Shop HM Series WM526

BY ERIC KIRKLAND

ICAN'T TELL YOU how many times I've heard players try to discredit the importance of choosing the right guitar by espousing flawed maxims like "The tone is in your hands" or "A better guitar isn't going to make you a better player." In my estimation these statements are only half of the story. Yes, we all have a certain touch and style that comes through no matter what guitar we use. At the same time, our true abilities are only fully realized through equipment that inspires us and supports our style and tone.

Today's advanced shredders are well served by a guitar that facilitates sweeps, two-handed techniques, legato phrasing, speed, high gain and unlimited whammy wanking. Washburn's new USA Custom Shop HM Series WM526 fits the bill. It's a greasy-fast ax that will challenge the technically proficient to push their physical and mental boundaries or just straight up rip with their favorite solo lines and fierce chordal assaults.

FEATURES

MAHOGANY IS A GREAT wood for a metal and shred guitar due to its inherently heavy bass, wide mids and controlled highs. It may not be as loud as alder or basswood, but mahogany's even tonality mixes well with high gain. All of the WM526's other design and component choices are aimed at adding attack and presence to the natural warmth of this guitar's mahogany body and neck. Aside from comfort and weight, the body is cut thin, allowing the modest resonance generated from light-gauge strings and a floating bridge to make the body ring.

The shape of the WM526's neck is cut for speed. At the nut, the hill is thin and C-shaped. It gains some depth and becomes flatter as you move higher. When you ultimately venture into the upper registers, the depth of the neck heel is countered by a comfort-enhancing bevel and rounded body contour. This reach-improving feature almost hides the trick that Washburn utilizes to gain more attack from the neck: instead of just pushing the neck into a hole under the pickups, this thin neck is set into a bolt-on style pocket that maximizes neck-to-body contact area.

Washburn partnered with Parker Guitars for the WM526's nearly flat fretboard. It's made from the same carbon-glass composite that Parker uses

on its futuristic Fly guitars and is topped with 24 jumbo stainless-steel frets. Your hands fly across this board! Clarity is further enhanced by Buzz Feiten's intonation-correcting tuning system.

The WM526 features the classic active pickup combo of an EMG 81 in the bridge position and an 85 in the neck slot. Pitch acrobatics and whammy stunts are courtesy of a rear-mounted Original Floyd Rose trem unit.

PERFORMANCE

WASHBURN'S ATTENTION TO construction details and careful part matching markedly enhance the shredding experience. In particular, Parker's responsive composite fretboard is a flawless platform for frenetic styles, and it presents tones with a neutral high-tech sheen that can't be duplicated with the hardest woods. Similarly, EMG's preamp-controlled balance and compression characteristics complement the tone.

The effects of high-tech moderators and Buzz Feiten's intonation system are most noticeable on the fretboard's upper end. Players that like to burn above the 15th fret and run hyperspeed modal sweeps will be empowered by the Washburn's ability to distinctly deliver each sound. It's really quite an exhilarating experience to hear every note played with such pianolike percussion and clarity. The tone may not be sweet and lush, but it's also not clinical or lacking in musicality. When I turned the gain down, the same qualities that made it so shreddable with high gain lent the WM526 to all manner of fusion. The Washburn's almost colorless and pure delivery of clean tones forced me to focus on note choice and composition.

THE BOTTOM LINE

WASHBURN'S USA CUSTOM Shop HM Series WM526 is designed for the latest generation of high-performance shredders. From the composite Parker fretboard to the EMG pickups, thin mahogany body, Floyd Rose trem and sword-tapered neck, everything on this guitar is designed to facilitate the most difficult techniques and produce intelligible tones at mind-numbing speeds. If shred is your king, the Washburn WM526 may just be your Excalibur—the tool that allows you to rule. ♦



**WASHBURN USA
CUSTOM SHOP HM
SERIES WM526**

LIST PRICE: \$2,399.99

MANUFACTURER:

Washburn Guitars, a
Division of U.S. Music
Corp., washburn.com

BODY: Mahogany,
contoured

NECK: Mahogany, set-in

FINGERBOARD: Parker

carbon/glass composite

RADIUS: 14 inches

SCALE LENGTH: 25 1/2

inches

FRETS: 24, stainless

HARDWARE: Original

Floyd Rose top-locking

system with back route,

Grover 18-1 mini-tuners

CONTROLS: Master

volume and tone, three-

way toggle

PICKUPS: EMG 81

(bridge), EMG 85 (neck)


**ON
DISC**

Original Floyd
Rose bridge
and active EMG
pickups are
metal's most
classic guitar
components.

Parker composite
fretboard and stain-
less frets are incred-
ibly fast, durable and
sweep friendly.

PRO	CON
AMAZING CLARITY IN ALL REGISTERS; HIGH-POWER TONE; EXTREMELY FAST	BATTERY ACCESS DOOR DIFFICULT TO OPEN; FACTORY TREMOLO TENSION A LITTLE TIGHT

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FULL METAL RACKET

First Act Premium Metal electric guitar

BY CHRIS GILL

MOST ENTRY-LEVEL electric guitars look dorky. You would probably be better off saving your money and buying a pair of suspenders, moon boots and Napoleon Dynamite glasses so at least you wouldn't be broke after the inevitable ass-whoopin' you would receive.

Fortunately, First Act is giving aspiring players increased odds for survival with its new Premium Metal electric guitar. Although this affordably priced guitar is sold by retailers like Toys R Us, it's not a toy but rather a cool-looking, high-performance ax.

FEATURES

THE PREMIUM METAL boasts much of the same attention to detail as First Act's more expensive models, such as beveled cutaways, a built-in boost circuit and a pair of high-powered humbuckers. The tuners, knobs and vibrato unit have a durable black finish that helps to set this guitar apart from the plain Janes in its price range. Even the gothic-looking gryphon design on the two-piece pickguard is undeniably cool and unusual.

Although the basswood body is rather small, it's perfect for preteens or anyone who digs compact guitar designs. The 22-fret maple neck features a wide, flat rosewood fingerboard and has a rock-solid feel with a thin, fast profile comparable to more expensive Ibanez models. The neck pocket fit is tighter than security on the Cheney

Ranch. Controls include master volume, master tone and a three-way pickup selector.

PERFORMANCE

INSTEAD OF THE BULKY baseball bat-style necks found on many beginner's guitars, the Premium Metal boasts a neck that's built for speed. The big, meaty frets make it easy to grind away at power chords or shred on solos, although the fret edges could use better attention to detail, as a few were sharp.

The humbuckers pump out surprisingly chunky tone with good definition and sustain. While you don't get a locking Floyd-style tremolo at this price point, the vintage style trem could handle generous abuse before going out of tune, perhaps thanks to the butt-ugly elongated headstock with its weird two-by-four tuner arrangement.

Flick on the boost circuit for meaty distortion—*phwoar!*



FIRST ACT PREMIUM METAL ELECTRIC GUITAR

LIST PRICE: \$159.99

MANUFACTURER: First Act, firstact.com

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood with dot inlays

FRETS: 22

BODY: Basswood

NECK: Maple

BRIDGE: Vintage-style tremolo

PICKUPS: Two First Act humbuckers

CONTROLS: Master volume, master tone, three-way pickup selector, boost switch

ON DISC

Dig the metal vibe of the pickguard's gryphon graphics.

THE BOTTOM LINE

IF YOU WANT TO buy an entry-level guitar good enough to encourage anyone to retain interest well beyond the beginner stage, First Act's Premium Metal is an ironclad choice.

PRO	CON
SHREDWORTHY, BEEFY HUMBUCKERS; CHEAP	SHARP FRET EDGES; BUTT-UGLY HEADSTOCK

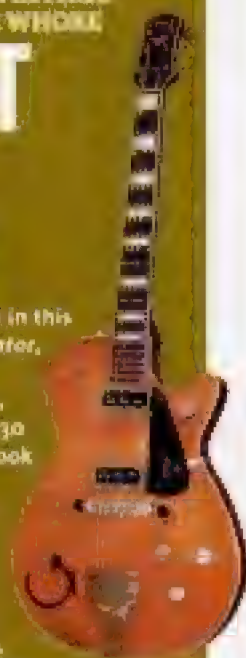
PLAYING THE MARKET RANCH DRESSING

AS BILLY GIBBONS explains in this month's feature on *Eliminator*, he played a whole lotta axes on that ZZ Top album, including a 1955 Gretsch 6130 Roundup. Once you get a look at this ultra-rare model, you'll understand why the guitar has appeal for a Texas son like Billy.

Introduced in 1954, the Roundup was designed for country music players (as its name suggests) and was similar in features and looks to the Chet Atkins 6121. The Roundup had a 13 1/4-inch-wide single-cutaway body finished in amber red, orange or mahogany brown and fitted with a top of knotty pine or mahogany (versus maple on the 6121). Models built from 1954 to 1956 had the full cowboy treatment: western "belt buckle" tailpiece, tortoiseshell pickguard with engraved steer head, a 22-fret fingerboard with celluloid block inlays featuring cow and cactus engravings, recessed leather binding engraved with campfire scenes, a longhorn steer inlay on the headstock and the "G" brand on the top. Electronics consisted of two DeArmond single-coil pickups, each with volume control, plus tone and master volume controls. Other features included gold-plated hardware, a Melita bridge and a bone or plastic nut.

The rustic features began to disappear in 1957, starting with the "G" brand and belt-buckle tailpiece. For 1958, Filter Iron humbuckers replaced the DeArmonds and thumbprint inlays came into use. A zero fret was added in 1959, the 6130's last production year.

Original Roundups are quite expensive, commanding as much as \$10,000 even in rough condition. In 2006, Gretsch reintroduced the 6130 as the G6130 with contemporary electronics and hardware, at a list price of \$3,445. Now discontinued, the G6130 can still be found online and in the existing stock of some retailers, allowing you to capture some of the original Roundup's vibe and sound at a fraction of the vintage-market price. —Curly Maple



BUZZ BIN NEW, HIP AND UNDER THE RADAR

DEEP VEE DIVER

Super-Vee tremolo system

WHEN LEO FENDER created the Stratocaster's six-screw tremolo bridge, he was simply hoping to find a way to provide subtle vibrato and pedal steel effects. Though effective, Leo's bridge didn't provide the most stable tuning and certainly wasn't designed to stand up to wild whammy whacking. The Floyd Rose locking trem solved this problem, but it requires modification to install and



robs some of the Strat's beautiful airy tone.

Enter the Super-Vee. This ingenious double-locking bridge

is a drop-in replacement for any six-screw or two-point Strat bridge. It bolts down in minutes and requires no permanent

modification to the instrument. Instead of pivot points, the Super-Vee rides on a patented frictionless blade that won't wear out. You can even set the position of the bar to suit your style.

In operation, the Super-Vee sounds at least as good as a vintage Strat bridge, has a smoother and more consistent feel than a Floyd Rose and is exceptionally stable. With its height-adjustable saddles and fine



tuners, the Super-Vee is the perfect trem for Strat players. —Eric Kirkland

SUPER-VEE TREMOLO SYSTEM

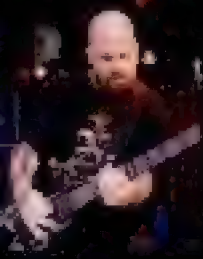
LIST PRICE: \$189.00

MANUFACTURER: Super-Vee, super-vee.com

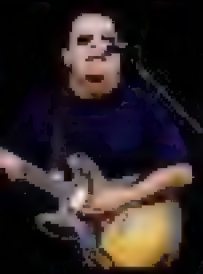
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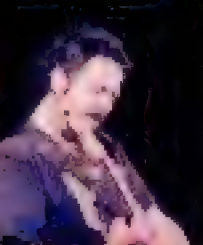
"Radial Gear is incredibly roadworthy and has improved my overall tone. I get less hum and buzz and a cleaner signal. Awesome! Radial rules!"
— Kerry King
(Slayer)



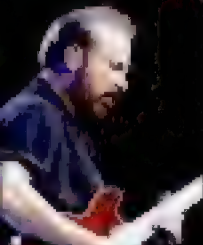
"I use my Radial Hot British on fly-in dates when using the big rig is impossible to bring along. My Hot British rocks!"
— Cesar Rosas
(Los Lobos)



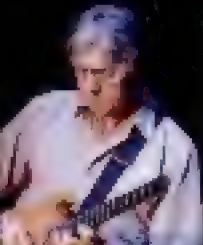
"We are extremely pleased with the PZ-Pre on James Taylor's guitars. It's a substantial improvement! Thanks to Radial for creating this elegant tool."
— David Morgan
(engineer - James Taylor, Paul Simon, Steve Nicks)



"I've tried every box ever made and nothing sounds like my Trimode. I recommend it to anyone looking for NATURAL warm sound with sustain for days!"
— Steve Lukather
(Toto)



"The Plexitube is the most versatile distortion pedal I own. It's also the quietest. I find all Radial Tonebone to be designed with sound quality, easy operation and durability in mind."
— Daryl Stuermer
(Genesis)



"The Switchbone sounds great! It is the best ABY box that I have used and transformer isolation makes it easy to combine two amps without noise."
— Allan Holdsworth
(IQ, Soft Machine)



"Having a Loophone in my pedalboard makes everything easier. It's so versatile... and the Drag[™] control fixes my sound with certain pedals."
— Audley Freed
(Black Crowes, Cry of Love)



"For years I've been trying to combine all of my favorite tones on stage. Thank God I found the Headbone. I only wish I had it years ago. I love my Headbone!"
— Mark Tremonti
(Alter Bridge, Creed)



"The Bassbone is just what I have been looking for... I can maintain the integrity of two instruments with control over the balance and keep my high standards for my low notes!"
— Nathan East
(Eric Clapton, Phil Collins)



"The Hot British box is truly deserving of the word 'Hot'. I definitely LOVE my Bone!"
— Kirk Hammett
(Metallica)



Radial PZ-Pre[™] acoustic preamp

Two-channel acoustic preamp features class-A piezo boosters for the best tone you have ever heard! Equipped with notch filter and high-pass for feedback control, parametric EQ, variable power booster for soloing and a mute switch for tuning. Four outputs feed your on-stage amp, tuner, PA system and in-ear monitors.



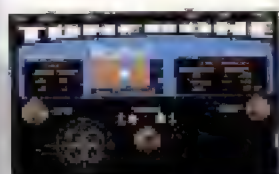
Trimode[®] 12AX7 tube distortion

Two channel Classic American style distortion with the sound and feel of a real tube amp. Amazing dynamics; Trimode cleans up nicely for slight overdrive and can be driven to extreme for sustaining solos. Channel-1 for rhythm, channel-2 for lead features an effects loop to activate your delay without tap dancing!



Plexitube[®] 12AX7 tube distortion

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Switchbone[®] ABY amp switcher

Quiet, noise-free, hum-free switching! A 100% class-A buffer and ABY switcher that drives two amps and a tuner. Photocell switching eliminates pops and a transformer isolated output eliminates nasty ground loops. A polarity switch lets you phase-align your amps so that they work in tandem. We've even added a variable power booster!



Loophone[®] effects loop switcher

The Loophone turns your pedalboard into a control center! 100% class-A circuitry drives two pedal chains and long cables without noise for clean natural tone. With a Loophone, all of those quirky pedals that you 'love to hate' can be switched out of your signal path when not in use. Drag[™] control load correction and Slingshot[™] equipped for remote switching.



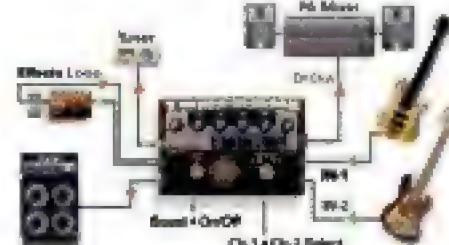
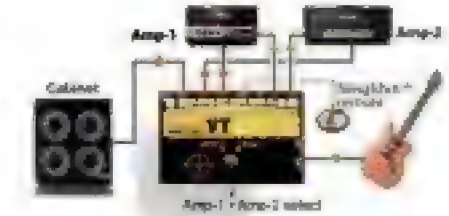
Headbone[®] VT tube amp head switcher

For the ultimate stage setup, the Headbone lets you switch between two heads using one cabinet. Just imagine... use a Bandmaster for rhythm and a Marshall for lead. Remote Slingshot[™] input lets you control the Headbone from your pedalboard and keeps your speaker cables short.



Bassbone[®] bass preamp

Two channel bass preamp lets you play two different basses and switch between them with a single foot stomp. Amazing tone controls sculpt your sound while the combination effects loop & power booster lets you control the stage. Built-in Radial direct box feeds the PA. Its no wonder Tony Levin, John Petrucci, Will Lee, and Victor Wooten all use the Bassbone!



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True-bypass ABY amp switcher with transformer isolation, polarity and ground lift.



BigShot PB-1
Class-A booster/buffer with variable Drag[™] and boost controls.



BigShot i/o
True-bypass instrument selector with tuner out and mute switch.



BigShot MIX
Class-A device to mix in effects without allowing pedals to mess up your tone.



BigShot EFX
True-bypass dual effects loop switcher with tuner out, mute and ground lift.

RIOT GEAR

Seymour Duncan Twin Tube Mayhem pedal

BY ERIC KIRKLAND

WHO COULD HAVE imagined that a decades-old company solely devoted to pickup winding would suddenly set the guitar industry on tilt with masterfully crafted pedals like the Twin Tube Classic, Lava box, Power Grid, Shape Shifter and Tweak Fuzz. Never before has a specialized company like Seymour Duncan so successfully diversified its product line and received such high marks for its freshman effort.

The latest addition to the company's stomp box line is the anxiously awaited Twin Tube Mayhem pedal. This is the Twin Tube Classic's criminally insane brother, born of Duncan's malicious intent and capable of terrifying acts of sonic aggression. Like the Classic, the Mayhem is more of a footswitchable tube preamp than a mere stomp box by virtue of its standalone ability to generate tube-derived gain and control a full-waveform signal, as opposed to only shaping or boosting portions of the sound to create a desired effect. Simply put, Duncan's Mayhem conjures diabolic high gain like you've never heard from a pedal.

FEATURES

WHEREAS DUNCAN'S TWIN Tube Classic creates Class A-style smooth and complex tones with a pair of triode micro tubes, the Mayhem uses a pentode tube and a triode tube to achieve more of a punchy Class AB-style response. There is no concern for the durability

and shock resistance of these NOS Philips-Sylvania 62051 micro bottles (each about an inch long)—they were originally specified by the military for use in combat conditions. Duncan wanted the most musical and dynamic distortion possible from this pedal, so no transistors or clipping diodes were employed to overdrive the signal. All of the pedal's weapon-like distortion is generated inside these little tubes.

The gain, volume, bass, mid and treble controls are set up in a standard master volume configuration, much like any typical preamp. Each of the EQ knobs has a center detent, so they grab a little when dialed to the noon position. As midrange focus is key to shaping metal tones, the mid control's range is set with a little slider switch. Low range sets it to a scooped 600Hz, while the high range dials into the piercing harmonic range of 1.4kHz.

Two switches are under foot: one to toggle on or bypass the unit and another to activate the Mayhem's boost. This boost is a lot like the solo function found on so many modern amplifiers, where the volume is increased but the tone remains unchanged. An adjacent

The high-/low-midrange switch lets players choose from forward and scooped styles.



LIST PRICE: \$325.00

MANUFACTURER:

Seymour Duncan,

seymourduncan.com

CONTROLS AND

FEATURES: Volume,

bass, mid, treble, gain,

midrange focus (1.4kHz

or 600Hz), on/bypass

footswitch, boost

footswitch (4 or 8db),

true-bypass switching

CONNECTIONS: Guitar

in mono, guitar out

mono

TUBES: Two military-

spec 62051 micro tubes

BYPASS: True bypass

CIRCUITRY: Analog

POWER: 16 volts from

supplied adaptor

ON
DISC



Military-spec Phillips/Sylvania NOS 62051 tubes create all of the pedal's extreme gain.

The boost provides a huge volume increase that's transparent and perfect for soloing.

slider selects boost levels of 4 or 8db. This boost is the icing on the cake, but I wish that it could be independently activated from the distortion circuit. Power is supplied by the included Duncan 16-volt adaptor.

PERFORMANCE

INSTEAD OF TESTING the Mayhem against other pedals, I went right for the jugular and pitted this pedal's tones against heinous high-gain amplifiers like Kerry King's Marshall Beast, a Krank Krakenstein, a Madison and my own FJA-modified Mesa Road King II. In addition, in most cases I ran the Mayhem into each amp's clean channel. Given the complexity and variation of the amp tones, I was more than a little surprised to hear the Mayhem convincingly and consistently copy each of their most ripping signature high-gain sounds. No, of course they aren't spot-on matches—that's not the point. But they were way too close for a pedal that sells for under \$300. I've heard a handful of other boutique-level high-gain tube pedals but none that come close to the Mayhem's flexibility and modern voices.

Even with all of this tube-derived saturation screaming through the Mayhem's circuit, it still preserves your guitar's tone and never compromises articulation. Single-coils, humbuckers, passives and actives all sound appropriately different through the Mayhem, and there's no compression added to achieve the extreme gain levels. Activating the transparent boost is like feeding crack to an angry mob. It really pushes this pedal's output level into the ridiculous realm and somehow does it without altering the tone or touch sensitivity.

THE BOTTOM LINE

IF YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING for a pedal that can produce absolute and total sonic destruction, I dare you to try the Seymour Duncan Twin Tube Mayhem. Activating the Mayhem effectively hardwires your amp to the bowels of hell and in so doing grants you access to the widest range of boutique high-gain tube tones ever packed into a pedal. ●

PRO	CON
SUPERBLY CAPABLE OF PRODUCING BOUTIQUE EXTREME GAIN; WELL-MADE; BOOST PROVIDES TRANSPARENT VOLUME SURGE	BOOST SWITCH DOES NOT WORK INDEPENDENTLY OF DISTORTION EFFECT

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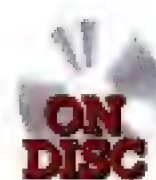
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2000

GODDESS OF TONE

Rivera Venus 6 212 guitar amplifier



BY CHRIS GILL

MANY GUITAR PLAYERS consider Class A tube amplifiers the purest-sounding guitar amps available because they deliver rich even-order harmonic distortion, fast transient response and accurate signal reproduction with no crossover distortion. The problem with many Class A designs is that they require complex power supplies, operate inefficiently, generate excessive heat, wear out tubes more quickly and deliver lower output power compared to an identical tube array used in a Class AB circuit.

When Paul Rivera set out to design Rivera's first entirely Class A amplifier, his goal was to conquer these reliability problems while he retained the tone and responsiveness for which Class A amps are loved. The result of his efforts is the Venus 6, featuring truly unique construction and characteristics such as 6V6 power tubes, oversized transformers and a massive heat sink. Available as a head, 1x12 combo or 2x12 combo (as tested), the Venus 6 pumps out 35 watts of pure Class A power from two distinctly voiced channels. With its heavy-duty construction and versatile tone circuit, the 212 makes a strong bid to achieve status as the ultimate gig-worthy Class A amp.

Channel 1 produces high-gain, harmonically rich British-style distortion.

RIVERA VENUS 6 212 GUITAR AMPLIFIER

LIST PRICE: \$2,699.00
MANUFACTURER: Rivera Amps, rivera.com
OUTPUT: 35 watts (17 with Vintage mode engaged)
TUBES: Four 6V6GT (power amp), five 12AX7 (preamp)
SPEAKERS: Two Celestion G12H 70th anniversary special edition 30-watt 12-inch
INPUTS: High gain, low gain
OUTPUTS: Speaker 1, speaker 2, line out, effect send, effect return
FRONT PANEL: Volume/channel select, bass, middle, treble, master/boost (channel 1); volume, treble/bright, middle/notch, bass, master/Ninja (channel 2); reverb, presence, Focus/Warm
REAR PANEL: Vintage/Modern switch, 16-/8-/4-ohm selector, effect loop 1/2/both switch, send level, return level
OTHER: FS-4 footswitch with channel select, gain boost 1, gain boost 2, effect loop switches

Want more gain? Pull out channel 1's boost or channel 2's Ninja controls.

FEATURES

THE VENUS 6 DIFFERS from most high-powered Class A designs by using a quartet of Electro-Harmonix 6V6GT power tubes, which Rivera chose for their ruggedness and tone, instead of EL84s. Five 12AX7 tubes drive the preamp and reverb circuits, and components sensitive to extreme temperatures are kept cool by being mounted outside of the chassis on a massive, industrial-grade heat sink that looks like a prop from the set of *Alien*. A Vintage/Modern switch mounted on the back panel drops the output to 17 watts when Vintage mode is selected.

Rivera amps earn praise for their versatility, and the Venus 6 is no exception. Channel 1 is a high-gain, British-voiced channel featuring volume, bass, middle, treble and master volume/boost controls, while Channel 2 is an American-voiced channel with volume, treble/bright, middle/notch, bass and master volume/Ninja (boost) controls. Both channels share reverb, presence and Focus/Warm controls, and the included FS-4 footswitch lets you select channels, engage boost for each channel and control the effect loop, but there is no on/off switch for engaging or disengaging the sweet-sounding, long-pan Accutronics spring reverb.

Channel 2 delivers a full range of American-voiced tweed and blackface clean and overdrive tones.

The Venus 6 212 comes loaded with a pair of Celestion G12H 70th anniversary special-edition 30-watt 12-inch speakers, which deliver the chime-like highs that Class A aficionados adore as well tight, focused bass and an assertive, vocallike midrange. A second speaker output and 16-/8-/4-ohm switch on the back panel lets you connect an additional speaker cabinet to the amp, and a line out jack lets you send the output signal to a mixing board or recorder. A three-position switch determines whether the effect loop affects channel 1, 2 or both, and individual send and return level controls let you dial in optimum input and output levels for effect pedals or rack gear connected to the effect loop.

PERFORMANCE

IF YOU LOVE THE harmonically rich distortion, fast attack and exceptional clarity of classic Class A amps, the Venus 6 212 is a must have, especially if you need an amp with enough power to gig with. But the Venus 6 does much more than that, providing sweet tweed- and punchy blackface American-flavored tones as well as sounds similar to vintage Hiwatt and "Plexi" Marshall amps. The Focus/Warm control is the secret weapon here, allowing you to make the bottom end tight and focused or loose and unruly, but the 6V6 tubes also play a significant role in the Venus's magic.

Whereas most spring reverbs on today's amps seem like afterthoughts, the Venus 6's reverb is an instrument unto itself, with a lush complexity rivaling that of a pristine vintage blackface Twin Reverb. Chords melt into infinity, and single notes remain fat and full without that metallic "water-drop" ping that lesser reverb units produce.

If you intend to gig with a Venus 6 212, be aware that it tips the scales at over 75 pounds. Two recessed handles make it easy for two people to carry, but the handles are somewhat small.

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE RIVERA VENUS 6 212 is like an aural encyclopedia of coveted vintage distortion tones. If you want harmonics that sparkle like diamonds, attack faster than a Bugatti Veyron and definition as crisp as pork rinds dipped in liquid nitrogen, the Venus 6 will take you to another solar system. ★



PRO	CON
RICH DISTORTION; VERSATILE; LOUD; RELIABLE CONSTRUCTION	EXTREMELY HEAVY; NO REVERB ON/OFF SWITCH

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G WHIZ

Samson G Track USB microphone

BY DANNY MILES

USB MICS HAVE BEEN around for a while but have yet to find a place in serious audio production. Not that they all sound bad—some offer very good fidelity. But the devices, which are essentially audio interfaces as well as microphones, can be problematic with some multitrack music software. You may find the driver for the device offers no way to monitor the backing tracks while recording. You may also be forced to switch interfaces if you want to plug in your guitar, a major drag on the convenience factor.

Samson's G Track, however, takes the good sound of an affordable condenser mic and adds the functionality of a stereo USB interface, including the ability to plug in a mono or stereo instrument and monitor audio from your DAW. It even has a built-in mini mixer that lets you adjust the balance between the computer's playback and the audio coming through the mic.

FEATURES

THE G TRACK'S MOST prominent feature is the mic itself, a large-diaphragm condenser sporting a 19mm capsule and a three-micron diaphragm with a supercardioid pickup pattern. Though less common than cardioid as a vocal pickup pattern, supercardioid mics are designed to reject sounds from the side, which makes them a good choice if you're recording near a noisy computer. The mic's housing is very solid—it's actually kind of heavy, but in a good way. The G Track looks and feels like a "real" studio mic, but it's sturdy enough to toss into a backpack and take on the road.

The G Track also boasts a 1/8-inch input that can handle mono or stereo instrument/line inputs. (Switching the input selector to instrument/mic lets you use the mic simultaneously with a mono input source; selecting the stereo position switches the mic out of the signal path.) Both the line and mic inputs have individual level controls conveniently located on the front of the mic. A clip LED helps you set levels. These knobs pop out for use and can then be pressed in to keep them from being moved by accident.

An onboard 1/8-inch stereo headphone jack lets you monitor direct from the G Track or can be used to drive a set of speakers. The G Track can be set to monitor its inputs directly and mix that with the signal

SAMSON G TRACK USB MICROPHONE

LIST PRICE: \$199.99
MANUFACTURER: Samson, samsontech.com
POLAR PATTERN: Supercardioid
ELEMENT TYPE: Condenser
DIAPHRAGM THICKNESS: Three microns
SENSITIVITY: -40 ±3dB/Pa
SPL HANDLING: 132dB
FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 20Hz–16kHz
CONTROLS: Volume (monitor), instrument (input level), mic (input level), source switch, monitor source switch
AUDIO CONNECTIONS: 1/8-inch stereo/mono instrument line in; 1/8-inch stereo headphone output
AUDIO RESOLUTION: 16-bit/48kHz
METER: Single LED
DIMENSIONS: 6.32 x 2.87 inches
WEIGHT: 1.38 pounds

from the computer, or to take signal only from the computer. If you choose the first option, you get zero-latency. Samson very smartly gives you the option of monitoring in mono or stereo; mono is great if you want to hear your vocals front and center and simultaneously use the instrument input.

The G Track hooks up to the computer via a USB jack on the bottom of the mic, where you would find an XLR jack on a traditional microphone. Setup on my MacBook Pro was instantaneous: I plugged in the mic, selected it as the input source in my software (Logic Pro) and started recording. The mic comes with a sturdy desktop stand (Samson offers an optional shock mount) and all the cables needed to get going, including USB and a mini-to-1/4-inch guitar



lead. The G Track comes bundled with Windows-compatible SONAR LE multitrack software.

PERFORMANCE

WITH 16-BIT/48KHZ analog-to-digital conversion, the G Track offers slightly better than CD-quality sound but doesn't reach the 24-bit/96kHz level that's become common even among moderately priced audio interfaces. The mic itself sounds fine, with a balanced and detailed response. It's not going to go toe-to-toe with a premium condenser, but it's darn good for something you can just plug into your computer at a moment's notice.

However, for best results, you may need to take some time setting your software's audio buffers. I had a few sonic artifacts and noises creep up during recording, and the line in was prone to hiss when levels were not set carefully.

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE G TRACK CAN be used for demo-level recording, but it's ideally suited to those times when you need to get your ideas down quickly and with minimal fuss. Thanks to its plug-and-play operation, you can record ideas immediately—making musical use of the time that it would take to set up a regular mic, preamp, and interface. At under \$200, the G Track is a useful tool and a solid value. ●

The volume, instrument and mic inputs have individual level control knobs conveniently located on the front of the mic

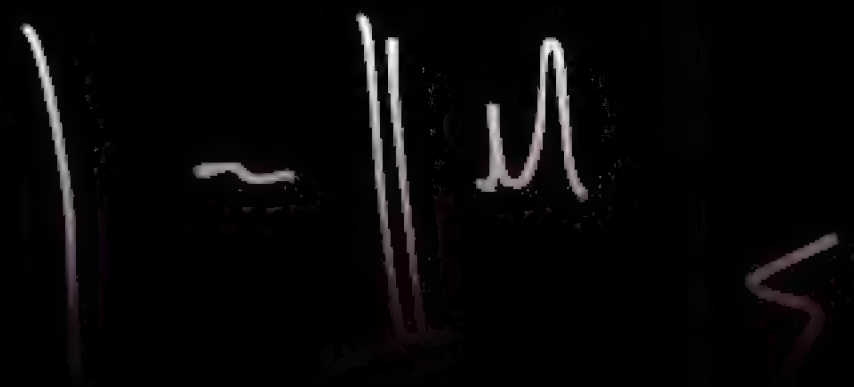


PRO	CON
PLUG-AND-PLAY OPERATION, CROSS-PLATFORM COMPATIBILITY, LINE INPUTS WITH MONITORING AND LEVEL CONTROLS	PRONE TO NOISE AND SONIC ARTIFACTS WITH SOME SOFTWARE

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SMOKIN' SIG

VHT Sig:X head



BY TERRY BUDDINGH

NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO, VHT paved the road for the modern "super-amp" category by combining a high-power output stage with three fully independent channels and an advanced switching system, along with a host of other groundbreaking features. The Sig:X extends that legacy with a truckload of fine-tuning features and enhanced versatility, and it's sure to attract a lot of attention from a wide range of players.

FEATURES

WITH 20 KNOBS and 15 mini-toggle switches spanning its front panel, the Sig:X might at first glance appear daunting. But when you visualize the control layout as three sections, with the Lead channel above the Rhythm channel, and the Clean channel to the right, the amp's basic functions are quite easy to understand and operate.

While each of the three channels offers a full set of familiar treble, middle, and bass controls, the mini toggles are the key to unlocking the amp's flexibility and full potential. These miniature switches let you fine tune and personalize each channel's individual texture, dynamic response and voicing nuances, and the range of possibilities seems almost unlimited when you add up all the switch combinations and multiply that by an almost infinite number of control pot variations.

The Power Shift mini toggles greatly expand each channel's range of dynamic response by shifting the amp's output between 40 and 100 watts. But there's

Like a custom shop in a box, each channel is brimming with a thoughtful array of uniquely voiced tone-tailoring options.

more to the dual-power option than simply lowering the output power. The Power Shift switches are the gateway to VHT's Enhance Mode and Dynamic Sensing Technologies, as well.

Introduced in 1995, VHT's Enhance Mode Technology utilizes a combination of tube and solid-state rectifiers to shift the voltage being fed to the output stage while also changing the amount of power-supply filtering.

"It's called 'Enhance Mode' because there is no on/off switching of the rectifier circuits," explains VHT founder Steve Fryette. "In 100-watt mode, the solid-state circuit operates in parallel with the tube rectifier supply, so both circuits are essentially enhancing each other. In 40-watt mode, the tube rectifier supplies the power tubes while the solid-state circuit feeds the regulated Dynamic Sensing preamp supply. The Dynamic Sensing feature varies the pre-amp tubes' voltages in response to the player's picking attack and the output level set by the Power Shift switch."

PERFORMANCE

WHILE THE SIG:X'S three channels are clearly labeled Clean, Rhythm, and Lead, each channel's range of tones, textures and dynamic response is much broader than its name might imply. For example, with a P-90-equipped Les Paul Junior and the Clean channel engaged in 100-watt mode, the Sig:X/Deliverance cab half stack can easily evoke a Hiwatt's powerful punch, crashing spank and brilliant sheen. The amazing thing is these impressive tones can be duplicated quite closely by the Rhythm and Lead channels. That's not the sort of range or capability you'd normally expect from channels that appear to be tailored more for higher-gain tones.

VHT SIG:X HEAD & DELIVERANCE 4X12 CABINET

LIST PRICES: Sig:X head, \$2,649.00; Deliverance 4x12 cabinet, \$1,395.00

MANUFACTURER: VHT Amplification, vhtamp.com

POWER OUTPUT: 100 or 40 watts, switchable and channel assignable

CHANNELS: Three

CONTROLS: Volume, treble, middle, bass for each channel; independent depth and presence for Clean channel; shared depth and presence for Lead and Rhythm channels; independent Gain I/Voicing, Gain II/Saturation and master for Lead and Rhythm channels; effect loop level/blend

SWITCHES: Power and standby; channel select; three-position pre-EQ voicing switch for each channel (with different voicings for each channel); Scoop/Wood switches for Lead and Rhythm channels; Fat/Open switch for Clean channel; boost switches for each channel; gain switches for Lead and Rhythm channels; 40-/100-watt switch for each channel; effect loop level, Series/Parallel mode, and Bypass; speaker impedance selector

FOOTSWITCH: Five buttons with LEDs; Lead, Rhythm, Clean, boost, effects; six-pin DIN cable connector

TUBE COMPLEMENT: One Tung Sol 12AX7, five Shuguang 12AX7A, two Sovtek KT88, one Electro-Harmonix 5U4EH

WEIGHT: 53 pounds

And that only begins to highlight the amp's impressive versatility.

Switching the Clean channel to 40-watt mode enhances the tactile response with a more resilient and expressive attack that's further embellished by switching the voicing switch to the aptly named "Bloom" position. The low end can be plumped to pleasing perfection with the help of the fat switch, and engaging the boost switch increases the drive by 6dB for more preamp push.

The Lead and Rhythm channels also feature assignable Power Shift switches, and their channel-specific pre-gain voice switches provide contrasting tone-tailoring palettes. Again, both of these channels are capable of an amazingly wide range of impressive tones; it would take days to talk about them all. With humbuckers or single-coils, either channel is capable of tight clean and crunch tones as well as a vast array of searing lead tones. And with some help from the amazingly powerful and effective boost, gain and scoop switches, you should have no problem crafting your own personalized signature scooped metal tones, too.

THE BOTTOM LINE

VHT'S SIG:X OFFERS an amazingly broad range of happening tones that seamlessly morph from channel to channel so effectively that it seems to transcend the narrow clean/crunch/burn limitations of a typical three-channel amp. And it forms an especially synergistic bond with VHT's well-mannered and musically balanced Deliverance 4x12 speaker cabinet. Whether you play classic rock, prog or metal, there's a wealth of signature tones waiting here to be discovered. ★



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SHAKING ALL OVER

Fernandes Tremor Deluxe bass

BY ED FRIEDLAND

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE that the Fernandes Tremor Deluxe bass is the weapon of choice for Tony Campos. As bassist for Static-X, Ministry and the Dino Casares-led death metal group Asesino, Campos has created plenty of tremors.

Fernandes' earliest Japanese-built electric basses were excellent Fender-styled classics, but the company has made an impact with its own designs, which include the Atlas, Gravity and Tremor series. The Tremor Deluxe, with its trademark body shape and great modern specs, is a worthy addition to the company's bass lineup.

FEATURES

THE TREMOR DELUXE has an understated modern vibe, but beneath the satin Gun Metal Blue finish are traditional tone woods: alder for the body and maple for the neck. The neck-through-body construction contributes to the instrument's impressive sustain and creates a smooth neck joint that makes journeying into the upper register very inviting, while the fat, round neck profile gives the bass a substantial feel and fits the hand nicely, particularly if you sling it low and use a "baseball bat" left-hand approach. The rosewood fingerboard has 24 well-seated jumbo frets and traditional dot position markers. The fingerboard radius is a relatively flat 16 inches, which is advantageous for tapping but is also a preference for many players. Both the Tremor four- and five-string models are built with standard 34-inch scale.

Black Gotoh tuners, a matching Wilkinson bridge and a 1 3/4-inch Graph Tech nut contribute to the value and performance of the instrument. The two EMG 35J pickups are built into a standard 3 1/2-inch soapbar case but actually use a single-coil design, which provides a narrow aperture for picking up the string, similar to on a Jazz Bass. EMG states the 35Js have a prominent midrange voice and get

their low-end response from their very low ratio of resistance to inductance. They have the full-range, high-fidelity tone that made EMG famous, and their dead-quiet operation is a big plus in the studio, or in clubs in which neon Bud Light signs share an electrical circuit with the stage. Driving the pickups is Fernandes' FGI two-band (bass/treble) preamp, which offers enough boost or cut to dial in a wide range of useful tones.

PERFORMANCE

AT A REASONABLE eight pounds, the Tremor is very comfortable at the end of a strap, and the satin-finished neck makes for a fast playing surface. The well-chiseled tone has a distinct, three-dimensional voice—this bass does not fade into the background. Both pickups together have a J-Bass-like quality that works great for edgy pickstyle, articulate finger work and sparkling slap. Cranking the lows creates a plush underpinning, but the naturally focused mids prevent the tone from getting out of control. The treble control adds shine—it blends nicely with the lows and brings out the Tremor's complex character.

Soloing the front pickup, I found the hollow chunk came close to P-Bass territory but with a tad less definition. A midrange control might help firm up this setting, but it's still a workable tone, especially with the treble rolled back. The bridge pickup on its own speaks fast and clear. Support it with some bass boost and you've got enough oomph to push your drummer around. Season with some highs and the Tremor can cut through a thick mix.

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE TREMOR DELUXE offers a good range of tones from fat to edgy, thanks in great part to Fernandes' FGI two-band preamp. The Tremor plays easy, looks cool and is a welcome change of pace from the usual suspects. **A**

PRO	CON
VERSATILE SCULPTED TONES	NONE

FERNANDES TREMOR DELUXE BASS

LIST PRICE: \$1,369.00

MANUFACTURER: Fernandes Guitars, fernandesguitars.com

BODY: Alder

NECK: Maple, neck-through

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood

FRETS: 24, jumbo

SCALE: 34 inches

PICKUPS: EMG 35J soapbars

ELECTRONICS: Two-band boost/cut bass/treble, master volume, pan

NUT: Graph Tech, 1 3/4 inches

Cool body styling has a rock and roll vibe but will look good in any situation.

Matte finish is understated but classy and prevents gunky buildup on the neck.

ON DISC

EMG 35J soapbars act like single-coils without the hum.



Fretboard Logic™

Paradigm Shift

1. A term to describe a fundamental change in basic assumptions in scientific thinking. It has since become widely applied to many other realms of human experience as well.

FROM: Thinking the guitar is just another musical instrument and should be approached the same as any other...

TO: Learning that the guitar is unique in the field of musical instrument design and just understanding its interface is a separate area of study.

FROM: "School sucks. My teachers are all idiots and the stuff they teach is boring as hell, so why is this going to be any different..."

TO: This guitar teacher was occasionally the smartest kid in the class, routinely the principal's worst disciplinary problem and almost always the best guitar player in school all rolled in one - uh, sound familiar?

FROM: The daunting task of facing thousands of seemingly random bits information in the form of basic music elements...

TO: A functional understanding of the pattern nature of the fretboard independent of music.

FROM: Strumming a plastic toy in front of a silly game console and pretending to be a rock star...

TO: Taking your guitar and music seriously and putting in the time and effort to learn something and maybe getting an act together to play for real people.



FROM: Expecting it's just another scam, because you've already bought so many other books, CDs and DVDs that didn't live up to the claims in the ads...

TO: Accepting that Fretboard Logic is an alternative approach, and all those endorsements you've been reading all these years are very real, and they are all from people just like you, who were just as skeptical but still willing to take a chance in order to make some progress, and when they did, they took time out of their lives to write in and say exactly what it meant to them, in their own words.

FROM: Rote memorization of the notes on the fretboard and then facing an endless number of tone group permutations...

TO: Building all the chords, scales and arpeggios you will ever need by easily combining music formulas with fretboard forms.

FROM: "It's probably going to be hard for me to understand, and I'm going to feel like an idiot..."

TO: Finding out very quickly that lot of work went into making it easy to understand and even more into making it funny. Don't forget that it was written by a true blue music lover and guitar-playing wiseass - so be bold, and this powerful force will come to your aid.

FROM: "Put this finger here and put that finger there, rinse and repeat a million billion times..."

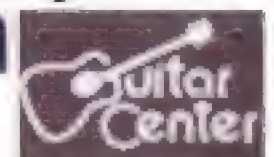
TO: Precise guitar-oriented descriptions that are easily learned and quickly retained.

FROM: Thinking in terms of multiple locations of the exact same pitches and having to guess which string to look for a note on...

TO: Knowing the notes by first knowing the fretboard forms provided by the tuning.



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CAUSE AND EFFECTS

Fishman AFX acoustic effect pedals

BY CHRIS GILL

FOR YEARS, ACOUSTIC-ELECTRIC players that wanted to process their instruments with effects have faced a dilemma. Because acoustic instruments have a refined, subtle sound, only studio-quality effects will do when you want to process acoustic tones. Unfortunately, such effects typically are offered in rack processors, which are unwieldy to haul around to most gigs and difficult to use in live performance. Effect pedals are a more ideal solution, but most stomp boxes are designed for electric guitars and provide less-than-desirable results with an acoustic guitar, often covering up the instrument's nuances instead of enhancing them.

Fishman's new AFX Series acoustic effect pedals provide the perfect answer for acoustic players who need the stunning sound quality of professional rack effects but want the convenience and portability of a stomp box. Fishman offers three pedals—Chorus, Delay and Reverb—that cover most of the processing ground that acoustic players need.

FEATURES

ALL THREE PEDALS are housed in rugged aluminum cases with identical control layouts. To avoid confusion, each effect features a color-coded footswitch: blue for Chorus, green for Delay and yellow for Reverb. Common features include stereo inputs and outputs, an input level switch that allows you to boost the signal of weak pickup while maintaining unity gain, a level control and eight presets. All three pedals also include a pair of knobs for adjusting effect parameters—tone and speed on the Chorus pedal, repeats and delay time on the Delay pedal and tone and decay time on the Reverb pedal.

The Chorus pedal is much more than just a chorus effect, offering three chorus presets, two tremolo effects and flanger, phaser and rotary-speaker presets. The Delay pedal provides

modern and classic delay presets, each with options for short, medium, long and ping-pong delays. It also includes a delay hold function that captures loops up to 2.9 seconds long and a tap feature that lets you manually set synchronized eighth-, dotted eighth- or quarter-note delays with an optional momentary footswitch connected to the tap switch jack. The Reverb pedal features presets for studio, room, plate, chamber, stage, concert hall, cathedral and "Canyon."

For professional-quality sound and performance, the pedals feature 24-bit A/D/A converters and 32-bit internal processing. Each can be powered with a nine-volt alkaline battery, which last about 20 hours, or with an optional Fishman 910-R adapter. An LED doubles as a clipping indicator and low-battery-power indicator.

PERFORMANCE

FISHMAN'S AFX PEDALS may cost more than average stomp boxes, but that's because these pedals produce outstanding effects that are comparable to the sound and quality of professional studio rack processors. In fact, these pedals sound so good that you may want to use them with your electric guitar as well—they simply make lesser pedals sound like cheap toys.

The Chorus pedal's modulation effects are rich and thick, but they don't obscure the essence of an acoustic guitar's tone. The Delay pedal produces razor-sharp digital delays and warm, tape-like echoes that maintain fullness and body as each repeat decays. The Reverb delivers decays with smooth tails, providing very natural room and hall sounds without the harsh metallic overtones that characterize cheap reverb effects.

All three pedals are very versatile, but the Delay pedal takes the prize for flexibility. The tap tempo and delay hold features are especially useful for live performance, allowing users to jam with their own loops and summon perfectly synchronized delays with a drum-

mer, rhythm machine or sequencer (and without nerdy MIDI timeclock fiddling). In fact, the tap tempo feature works so well that it pretty much makes the delay time control unnecessary.

The Chorus pedal's flanger and phaser presets are appropriately subtle, producing a light background woosh instead of dramatic "landing jet" sweeps. The tones range from a useful thickening effect to a lush, 12-string-like sound. Of the eight reverb presets on the Reverb pedal, the room, plate

FISHMAN AFX ACOUSTIC EFFECTS PEDALS

LIST PRICE: \$389.95

MANUFACTURER:

Fishman, fishman.com

PRESETS: Eight

CONTROLS: (Chorus) level, tone, speed; (Delay) level, repeats, delay time; (Reverb) level, tone, decay time

INPUTS: Stereo 1/4-inch

OUTPUTS: Stereo

1/4-inch

POWER: Nine-volt battery or optional AC adapter

The Clipping LED doubles as a low-battery-power indicator.

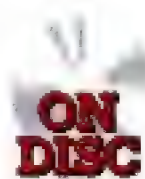


The Delay pedal includes a tap switch jack for controlling tap tempo functions.

and concert hall presets were my personal favorites, while I found the cathedral and Canyon effects perhaps too dramatic.

THE BOTTOM LINE

IF YOU NEED STUDIO-QUALITY sound but the portability and convenience of stomp boxes, Fishman's AFX pedals are the only way for acoustic-electric players to go. While the cost of all three pedals together may be as much as a good rackmount multi-effect unit, it's difficult to match the live performance functions and ease of use that they offer. ★



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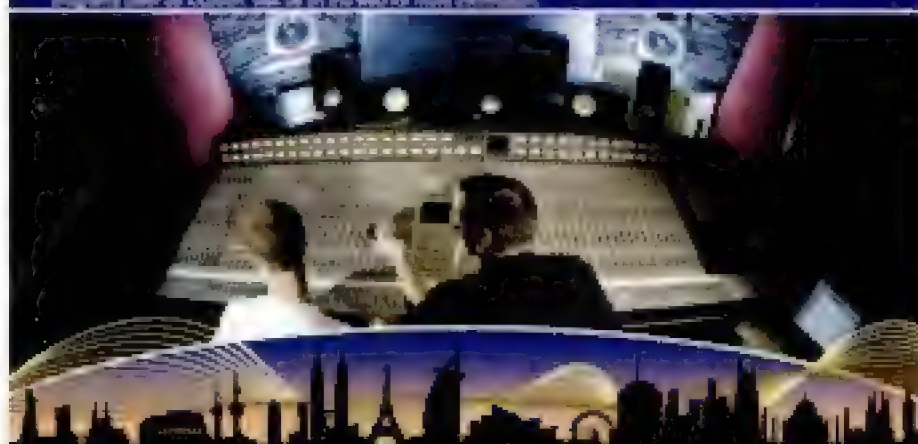
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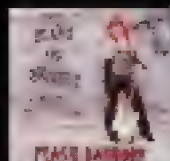
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OFF THE SCALES

Matt Bruck weighs in with advice for a reader who tunes down to low A.

I have a Epiphone Goth Les Paul that I tune all the way down to drop A with .012-.068 strings. I have no problems with the guitar except for some fret buzz. I decided to try to fix the buzzing by myself by raising the bridge. This eliminated the buzzing, but I noticed that the strings didn't feel as snappy as they should. I lowered the bridge and the strings felt snappy and fresh again, but the buzzing came back. Should I be doing something in addition to adjusting the bridge?

—Ryan Stofferahn

The problem you're experiencing mainly stems from the low tuning you're using and how it relates to the scale length of your guitar. Most (though certainly not all) standard guitars have scale lengths that range from 24 3/4 (as on your Epiphone Les Paul) to 25 1/2 inches, and they are designed for string diameters that range from .008 to .056. By comparison, a baritone guitar tuned to low A would have a scale length of about 30 inches—more than five inches longer than the scale length on your Paul—and use strings with diameters that range from .013 to .070 or even .080. Under the circumstances, you can probably see why your Les Paul is experiencing buzzing and poor string response, even with heavier-gauge strings.

The most important suggestion I can offer is to have your guitar's nut recut to compensate for the larger-diameter strings. This should reduce fret buzz and help your strings retain the snappy feel you like. In addition, have the truss rod adjusted until it's just shy of dead straight. This, too, will reduce buzzing and improve string responsiveness. Lastly, you might want to try even heavier gauge strings to improve not only responsiveness but also tone.

These recommendations should alleviate the problems you're having. With that said, given the realities of scale length and your low tuning, I don't think that they will make your guitar's performance perfect, just better.

I have a Marshall JCM900 50-watt high-gain dual-reverb model 4502 early Nineties 2x12 combo with stock Celestion G12T-75 speakers. I'm not getting a sound that I'm satisfied with—there's no bottom end. I'm thinking of changing the speakers to Celestion

Vintage 30s. Will doing this improve the situation? If so, should I use eight- or 16-ohm speakers, and what difference would ohm rating make in the sound? My amp has a switch that lets me select either "8" or "4(16)," and I'm not sure what that does either.

Do you suggest replacing the tubes as well? I read that the 6CA7 would be a good replacement for the EL34. I play hard rock, mostly in a cover band, and I really love the early Van Halen sound. The Marshall half stack and the EVH stuff is out of my price range these days, so I'm trying some alternative (i.e., cheaper) ideas to get that sound I'm looking for.

—Vince

Vince, these are all good questions. While others may disagree with me, I think that swapping the Celestion 75s for the Vintage 30s might actually backfire on you. Granted, the Vintage 30s will, in all likelihood, break up earlier than the 75s, but I think you could actually lose some of the bottom end that you've got presently with the 75 watters.

I think the 6CA7 is a good replacement for EL34, but I think of it as having a cleaner sounding than the EL34, with less output distortion, which you may miss. In any event, I don't think the 6CA7 will contribute any significant bottom end to your sound. The fact that your amp has an open-back design is probably one of the biggest factors contributing to the absence of pronounced bottom end. I suggest that you get a closed-back cabinet—either 2x12 or 4x12—and run it as an extension speaker to help enhance the low end. Check your amp's impedance setting; if it's set for eight ohms, leave it there when you employ the extension cab; if it's set to four ohm, leave it at that setting when you run the extension cab.

I have a Randall G3 75-watt amp that has a slight problem. When carrying it, I've noticed a clunking sound. Upon looking at it closely, I noticed that the speaker is moving around. It is still connected, and the amp still works, but the tone doesn't seem to be as good. Recently, when I turned the volume up past 7 at a show, the sound cut out completely until I turned it back down. Could a loose speaker cause this change, and how should I go about

solving this problem?

—Jon Bierma

Based on what you've described, I would say that your tone is absolutely suffering as a result of the loose speaker.

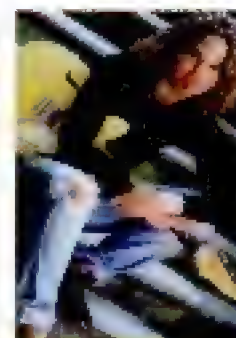
Fortunately, the fix is simple. Speakers are mounted to cabinets with hardware such as screws, hex nuts and so on. Though these should keep speakers securely attached to the cabinet, they may become loose over time from cabinet vibration, transport, rough handling or damage. Determine how the speaker is mounted inside your amp and remount it with the appropriate hardware. If screws have become loose, tighten them. If they are stripped and won't hold the speaker to the cabinet, you'll have to fill the screw holes before replacing the screws. Use a wood dowel slightly smaller than the screw diameter to fill the holes, then replace the screws. They should tighten firmly in the newly filled holes.

In addition, be sure that the speaker wires are still connected and that the connections are not broken or weakened. If they are damaged, they will have to be resoldered. This is an easy job to perform, but I recommend that you let an amp repair shop do it for you. They'll make quick work of the job and shouldn't charge you more than about \$25. *



CORRECTION

In my previous column, it was incorrectly stated that Rickenbacker does not use the dual truss rod system any longer, nor does the company provide replacements. In fact, virtually all models use dual truss rods, and Rickenbacker does provide replacements for these, though pre-1984 truss rods are no longer supported. According to John Hall, CEO of Rickenbacker International Corp.: "Dual, field-replaceable truss rods is an important distinction and marketing point for Rickenbacker guitars, except for some vintage reissue models."



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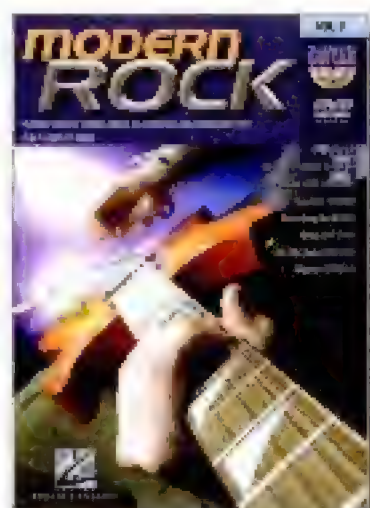
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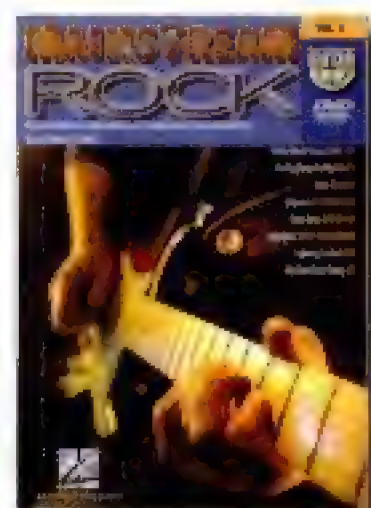
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NEED TO ELECTRIFY YOUR ACOUSTIC GUITAR? *GUITAR WORLD* GIVES YOU ADVICE AND OPTIONS IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO ACOUSTIC GUITAR PICKUPS.

BY CHRIS GILL

THE ACOUSTIC GUITAR may be the ultimate portable musical instrument, but if you want to play for an audience of greater than six homeless panhandlers or a gaggle of pissed-off squirrels, you need to amplify your flattop.

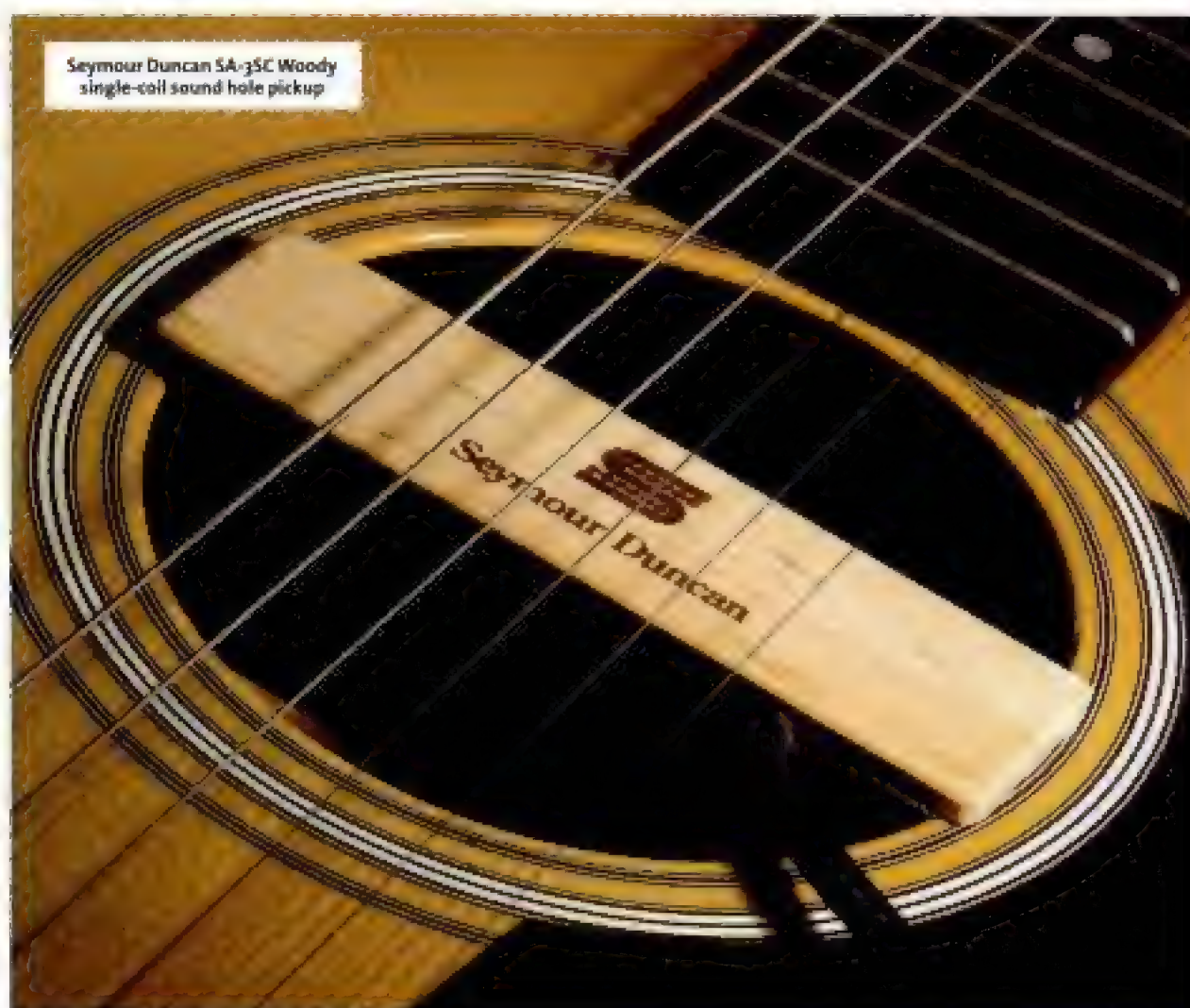
Installing a pickup is the most efficient solution for acoustic performers who want or need to amplify their instruments. Fortunately, pickup technology has progressed in leaps and bounds over recent years, and most models provide the rich, resonant, natural tone that acoustic purists demand.

If you don't already own an acoustic-electric guitar or can't afford to buy one, don't worry. Many affordable pickup systems are offered these days, and most can be installed with little or no modifications to your instrument. Choices range from removable sound-hole pickups to sophisticated multipickup systems that combine different technologies. To help you narrow your choices, I'm going to describe the various strengths and weaknesses of the most popular types of pickup systems as well as describe the features of various popular models.

Once you have a few choices, ask if the dealer has a guitar with the system already installed so you can examine its sound and performance before you make your purchase. The right pickup system can provide a lifetime of satisfaction, while the wrong system can be like a coyote date, making you want to chew off your guitar's neck after a disastrous one-night stand.

FEAR OF COMMITMENT

THE PROSPECT OF permanently installing a pickup in a beloved vintage ax or future classic can cause many acoustic guitarists to consider a life of unplugged celibacy. Fortunately, magnetic sound-hole pickups and contact pickups allow players to electrify their acoustic guitars without making any modifications at all.



Seymour Duncan SA-3SC Woody single-coil sound hole pickup

Sound-hole-mounted magnetic pickups have improved by leaps and bounds since the Seventies, when sound-hole pickups were basically identical to pickups designed for electric guitars. Most of today's magnetic acoustic guitar pickups are designed to work well with bronze and phosphor bronze strings (instead of just nickel or stainless-steel strings), and they produce tones that retain most of a guitar's inherent acoustic qualities instead of producing harsh, distinctly electrified sounds. Like electric guitar pickups, they are espe-

cially resistant to feedback.

Most sound-hole-mounted magnetic pickups are very inexpensive. A variety of models sell at street prices below \$100, including the Dean Markley Pro Mag SC-1, DiMarzio Elemental DP134 and DP135, Fender ACP-1, Fishman Pro Neo D01 and D02, Lace Acoustic Bronze, Shadow SH330 and SH140, and Seymour Duncan SC, HC and XL. If you can afford to spend more, you might want to consider the Sunrise pickup, a popular choice with many pros that is produced in very limited quantities.



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L.R. Baggs I-Beam

Most of these pickups feature output cables that are connected directly to the pickup itself. Main drawbacks to this design are that it can be difficult to replace the cable if it becomes damaged, and sometimes the cable can get in the player's way because it dangles out of the sound hole. Also be aware that some of these pickup models feature an endpin output jack, which requires a more permanent installation than a model that simply fits into the sound hole.

Like electric guitar pickups, single-coil magnetic acoustic guitar pickups produce bright, lively tones, but they're more susceptible to noise. Humbucking pickups reduce or eliminate noise and deliver fatter, warmer tone. Most magnetic sound-hole pickups only amplify the sound coming from the strings, which can be a blessing or a curse depending on your playing style. If your playing technique involves percussive body slaps, your only option is the L.R. Baggs M-1 or M-1A pickup. Another important feature to consider when choosing a magnetic sound-hole pickup is adjustable pole pieces, which allow you to balance the output of each string.

The contact piezo transducer was one of the first pickups designed especially for acoustic instruments, and this type of pickup is still a good choice today if you're looking for an inexpensive, nonpermanent option. Popular choices include the Barcus Berry DISQOS and Outsider, Dean Markley Artist Transducer, DiMarzio Acoustic Model, Fishman SBT-E and McIntyre GF-30. While the sound quality of a contact transducer is not as rich and detailed as that of a permanently installed undersaddle or soundboard-mounted pickup, it is still quite good. A contact transducer is a good choice if you play in a band with other instruments, since the details of a more refined system would probably get lost in the mix anyway and contact transducers are especially resistant to feedback. Unlike most magnetic pickups, contact transducers amplify sounds produced by the top as well as the strings.

Most contact transducers are passive pickups that need to have the output signal boosted with a preamp to retain full fre-

quency response, so be aware that you'll need to add in the cost of an external preamp. These pickups usually sound best when mounted on the bridge or on the soundboard near the bridge, but sometimes it can be difficult to find the ideal sweet spot. The nonpermanent adhesive used to attach a transducer to the guitar is designed to not harm the finish, but be forewarned that your mileage may vary. If you don't want to risk damage to the finish on a vintage instrument, you might want to consider an internally mounted transducer like the Barcus Berry Insider or K&K Sound Pure Western, although these systems generally sound better when they are permanently affixed to the instrument.

SADDLE UP

ACOUSTIC GUITAR PICKUP technology reached a significant breakthrough in the late Seventies and early Eighties when the first undersaddle piezo pickup systems were developed. Since then, undersaddle pickups have become the most popular technology for amplifying acoustic guitars, and manufacturers have made significant improvements in the design of these pickups to provide better sound quality than ever.

While magnetic pickups are sensitive only to string vibrations, piezo pickups, which are made from ceramic, crystal or polymer material, respond to pressure. Since most of the variations in pressure caused by the guitar's vibrating strings and top are focused at the saddle, this is the ideal place to install a piezo pickup. Installation of an undersaddle pickup is a relatively simple affair that involves removal of the saddle, drilling a tiny hole in the slot for the pickup wire and drilling a larger hole in the end block or side for the output jack. While the process requires very basic woodworking skills, you may want to leave the

task to a professional guitar repair tech if you don't want to risk damaging your instrument.

Piezo pickups produce a very accurate representation of a vibrating string's sound, and as a result the tone produced by most piezo pickups is very bright with a pronounced attack and outstanding resistance to feedback. However, piezo pickups don't capture the reverberant body resonances that contribute to an acoustic guitar's warm character. Because a piezo pickup is passive, a preamp is essential. Preamps designed especially for use with piezo pickups tame excessive treble harshness and midrange "quack" to provide warmer, richer and more natural tone.

Some undersaddle pickups feature separate crystal elements for each string, and as a result exact positioning of the pickup is critical to ensure that the output for each string is balanced. Newer designs made from polymer materials consist of a single pickup element, and these pickups are easier for novices to install. L.R. Baggs offers the LB6 series, which consists of a saddle with the pickups already built in to make installation easy and foolproof.

Dozens of companies offer undersaddle pickup systems. B-Band, Dean Markley, D-TAR (Duncan Turner Acoustic Research), Fishman, LR Baggs, Martin and Shadow are some of the more popular companies, but acoustic specialists like Highlander, K&K Sound and Pickup the World also offer outstanding systems that are the preferred choice of many pros.

UNDER THE BRIDGE

ONE OF THE MOST recent developments in acoustic guitar pickup design involves pickups that are internally mounted on or near the guitar's bridge plate. Unlike undersaddle pickups, which are especially sensitive to attack dynamics, bridge-plate pickups provide a well-balanced, mellow tone that many users feel is exceptionally close to an acoustic guitar's natural tone. These pickups also do an exceptional job of capturing resonance overtones since they amplify top vibrations as well as string vibrations.

Most pickups for these systems are contact transducers with refined designs that are adapted for internal mounting. The K&K Sound Pure Western, L.R. Baggs I-Beam, Schatten Design HFN and Trance Audio Acoustic Lens are a few of the more popular

bridge-plate pickup systems. The B-Band AST features a unique ultrathin, lightweight elastic electret film condenser design that functions similar to a condenser microphone. These pickups only work with specific preamps, so make sure you consider the cost of the entire system before you make a commitment that you can't afford. One recent development that is becoming increasingly popular is a miniature internally mounted



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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ACOUSTIC PICKUPS

microphone. These tiny wonders provide many of the same benefits as an external microphone, such as exceptionally natural tone and accurate reproduction of all aspects of an acoustic guitar's sound (including resonance and body taps and slaps), as well as a few that an external mic doesn't provide, such as uninhibited stage mobility.

However, an internal mic is more susceptible to feedback due to the excessive bass frequencies that reside in a guitar's acoustic chamber, and some listeners feel that the sound inside of a guitar is very different than what the ear hears outside of a guitar. Positioning of the microphone is critical, both to provide optimally balanced tone and to avoid feedback. You can spend endless hours wrangling with a goose-neck mount in search of the perfect mic location only to find that it's extremely sensitive to feedback when you crank up the volume. Also, tiny microphones with miniature elements just can't compete with the definition and accuracy of a large condenser mic.

PREMIUM BLEND

IF YOU'VE TRIED all of the above systems and found that none of them gave you exactly the sound you had in mind, a multiple-pickup system that combines two or three different types of pickups may be the perfect solution. Do you like aggressive attack but don't want to sacrifice the warmth of body resonance? A system that combines an undersaddle pickup and an internal microphone could be the

answer. Systems that mix sound-hole pickups with internal microphones, undersaddle pickups with sound-hole pickups or even undersaddle and bridge-plate pickups with internal microphones let you enjoy the advantages of each type of pickup and downplay their individual disadvantages.

Blend systems are the ideal choice for players who want to capture the most accurate, natural acoustic tones when amplifying their instruments for live performance. These can be the most expensive systems on the market, and installation is usually much more difficult and complicated than installing a single-pickup system. The easiest systems to install are those that combine magnetic pickups and internal microphones, like the Seymour Duncan SA-6 Mag Mic and Fishman Rare Earth Blend, which feature sound-hole-mounted designs that literally make installation a snap. The Fishman Ellipse Matrix Blend (undersaddle and internal mic), K&K Sound Trinity (bridge-plate transducers, internal mic and preamp) and Power Mix Trinity (bridge-plate, undersaddle and internal mic) and L.R. Baggs



iMix (bridge plate transducer and undersaddle pickup) are just a few of the most popular pickup systems that combine several technologies in one, easy-to-use package.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

UNLIKE ELECTRIC GUITAR pickups, which are designed to provide their own unique tonal character, most acoustic guitar pickups are designed to provide an accurate reproduction of an acoustic guitar's natural tone.

Whereas part of the fun of playing electric guitar is matching the tonal characteristics of your pickups with the unique personalities of various amps, acoustic guitar pickups are usually designed as part of a bigger system featuring very specific components that work together to deliver optimum performance.

As a result, most undersaddle and bridge-plate pickup systems are designed for use with specific preamps, buffers or direct boxes. Before you make your final choice, make sure that the preamp designed for use with your pickups offers the features you need and that you can afford it. Compact, internally mounted preamps can be very convenient, but

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you should be aware that they usually require you to place the batteries inside the guitar as well. External preamps are usually more versatile and offer extra features such as EQ and feedback suppression, but they can be very expensive, and the extra features may be redundant if you already own or use an acoustic guitar amplifier or play your guitar through a mixer. Preamp control units that mount on the side of a guitar offer the ultimate in performance convenience, but you may not want to cut a large hole into the side



D-TAR Mama Bear preamp

of your favorite vintage acoustic to install it.

THIS YEAR'S MODEL

EVEN WITH THE best attempts and intentions, sometimes it's nearly impossible to achieve a

decent amplified acoustic tone, especially if your budget is limited from the beginning. Fortunately, new advances in digital modeling technology provide all of us with the ability to significantly improve the sound of our acoustic instruments in amplified live performance environments. These products do a remarkable job of transforming lackluster tones into professional-quality finished products, but that doesn't mean you should get the cheapest, worst-sounding pickup from the get-go with the intention of digitally fixing it later. The better your guitar sounds from the beginning, the better it will sound at the end.

The D-TAR Mama Bear acoustic guitar preamp and Fishman Aura Imaging pedals allow you to transform lackluster tones from magnetic sound-hole or undersaddle bridge pickups into stunning acoustic guitar tones that sound like they were recorded in a professional studio. The D-TAR Mama Bear emulates the tonal characteristics of 16 guitars, while the Fishman Aura pedals are available in a variety of configurations, each designed to complement specific source instruments such as jumbo or dreadnought guitars. These products take a lot of the hassle out of amplifying an acoustic guitar, and they pave the way for exciting new developments that we'll certainly be seeing in the near future.

END OF THE AFFAIR

THE VARIETY OF products and options for amplifying an acoustic guitar are truly staggering, but the hopefully the information above has helped you narrow down the selection of choices that are right for you. But like photos in a Russian mail order bride catalog, descriptions don't always tell the whole story. The best way to find the ideal pickup is to get out there and test the field yourself.

Start by looking at retailers that specialize in acoustic instruments or that stock a wide variety of instruments. Most of these stores should already have guitars with a variety of different pickup systems installed that you can contrast and compare. In a perfect world, you should be able to audition the exact that system that you want to buy, but even systems with similar features can give you a good idea of what a particular type of pickup sounds like. These stores also will most likely have a repair department or custom shop that can properly install the pickup system you choose.

No matter what pickup you choose, these days it's pretty difficult to end up with a useless system that doesn't sound even remotely acoustic. However, like all good things in life you definitely get what you pay for. If you want a pickup system with crystal-clear transparent sound that flawlessly amplifies every nuance of your acoustic guitar, be prepared to shell out at a grand or more. If you just want to make your guitar louder but still retain some acoustic character, you can probably get by with a pickup that costs \$100 or less. Don't hesitate to upgrade to a better pickup that costs only a few dollars more as it will probably provide you with more satisfactory performance in the long run. *

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List Price: \$2,999.00
C.F. Martin and Co.,
mguitar.com



Fishman Matrix Infinity active preamp

Fishman's Matrix Infinity active preamp has been completely redesigned to deliver transparent tone and crystal-clear string response. The system includes the Acoustic Matrix undersaddle pickup and features sound-hole-mounted volume and tone controls that allow fast and easy adjustments and do not detract from the beauty of the instrument. Plus, switchable voicing allows the Matrix Infinity to accommodate all guitar body sizes and performance situations.

List Price: \$209.95; MAP: \$139.95
Fishman Acoustic Amplification, fishman.com



D-TAR Mama Bear acoustic guitar preamp

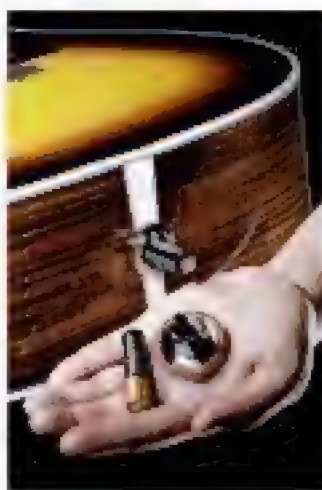
Acoustic guitar pickups lack the sensitivity to deliver the complexity of acoustic tone. D-TAR's Mama Bear acoustic guitar preamp takes your guitar into the digital realm. First it neutralizes the sound of your pickup, then it restores the natural body resonance, allowing your acoustic guitar to sound like itself, only louder.

List Price: \$499.00
Duncan Turner Acoustic Research, d-tar.com

D-TAR Wave-Length pickup with Load 'N Lock battery access

This system is built around the Wave-Length pickup, which combines a thin, piezo transducer with a high-headroom, 18-volt, low-noise preamp. The Load 'N Lock access system allows quick and easy AA battery changes. Just unscrew the endpin, remove the old batteries and pop in the new ones.

List Price: \$199.00
Duncan Turner Acoustic Research, d-tar.com



Boulder Creek Guitars Solitaire Series-ECR3-N

The Boulder Creek ECR3-N Solitaire acoustic guitar has a solid cedar top, mahogany sides and a solid mahogany back, and it incorporates the patent-pending "SBS" Suspended Bracing System, which is designed to increase the tone and sustain. The top-facing sound port directs the tone to the player without compromising forward tone and volume projection, and the special AB4-T preamp system features a built-in tuner and XLR (balanced) and 1/4-inch (unbalanced) outputs.

List Price: \$999.99
Boulder Creek Guitars, bouldercreekguitars.com


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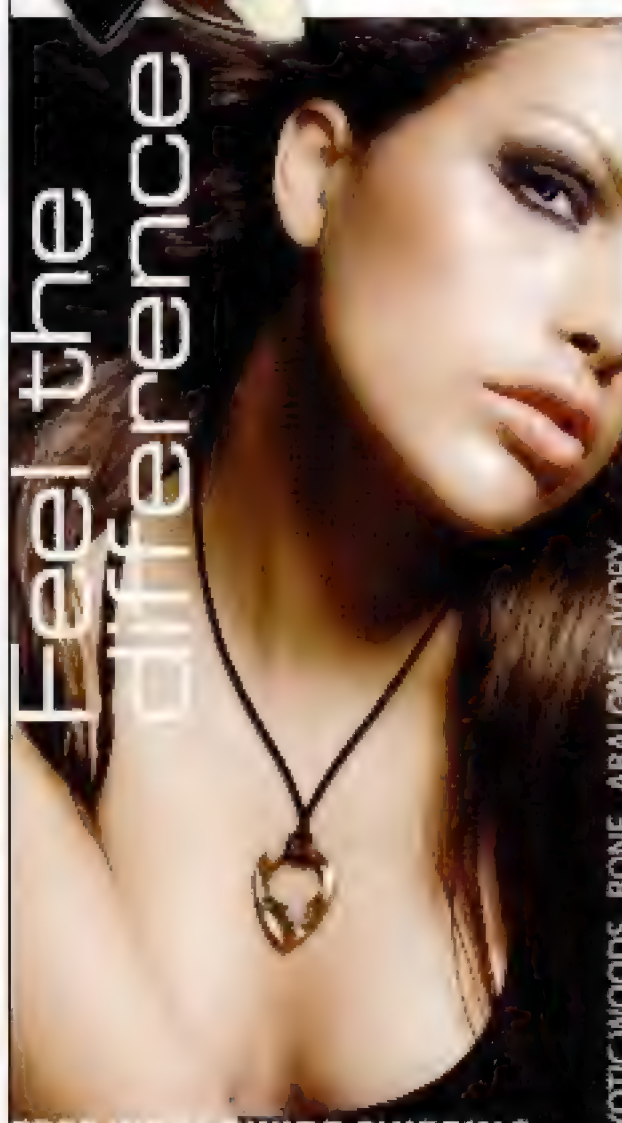
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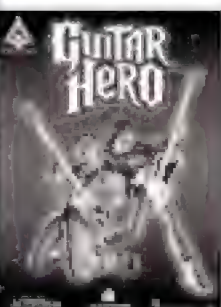


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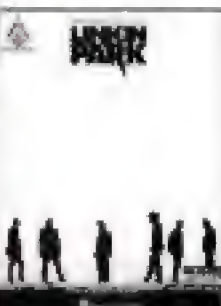
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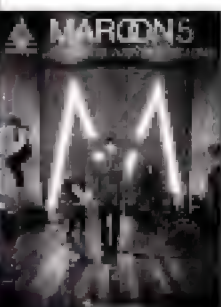
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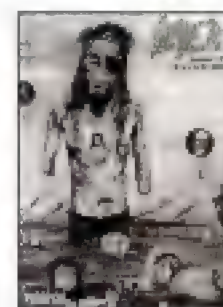
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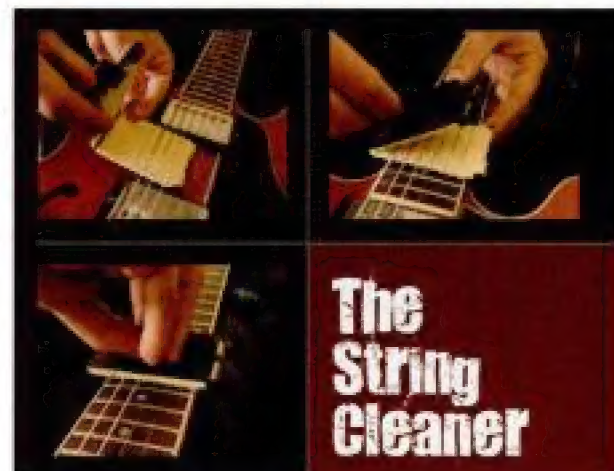
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BIG FOOT

Paul Gilbert ponders pedals, the power of a combo cranked to 11 and the possibility that his hero, Robin Trower, is in the audience.

By NICK BOWCOTT

>>DESIGN PHILOSOPHY Compared to the complicated rigs we've dissected of late, the setup of super shredder Paul Gilbert is super simple. "I had a brief stint with rack gear in the Eighties when it first came out, just because I was curious," he explains. "But for most of my life I've liked to use a guitar, a couple of pedals and a one-channel amp."

Unlike most of his peers, who use 100-watt stacks, Gilbert prefers a comparatively diminutive Marshall Vintage Modern 2266C combo. "I don't know if having the speakers in the same box as the amp vibrates the tubes more, but I

find that whenever I plug into a combo it seems more resonant. Since I use a 50-watt amp, I can really crank it up—and that's the *only* way to really appreciate and *feel* the power tubes."

>>CONTROL ISSUES Of his pedals, Gilbert says he mostly uses "the ones that add overdrive, because the ultimate hobby of the rock guitar player is tweaking the fine points of his distortion. The basic tone and distortion come from my amp, but if I want a little more sustain or variety, I'll kick on an overdrive pedal."

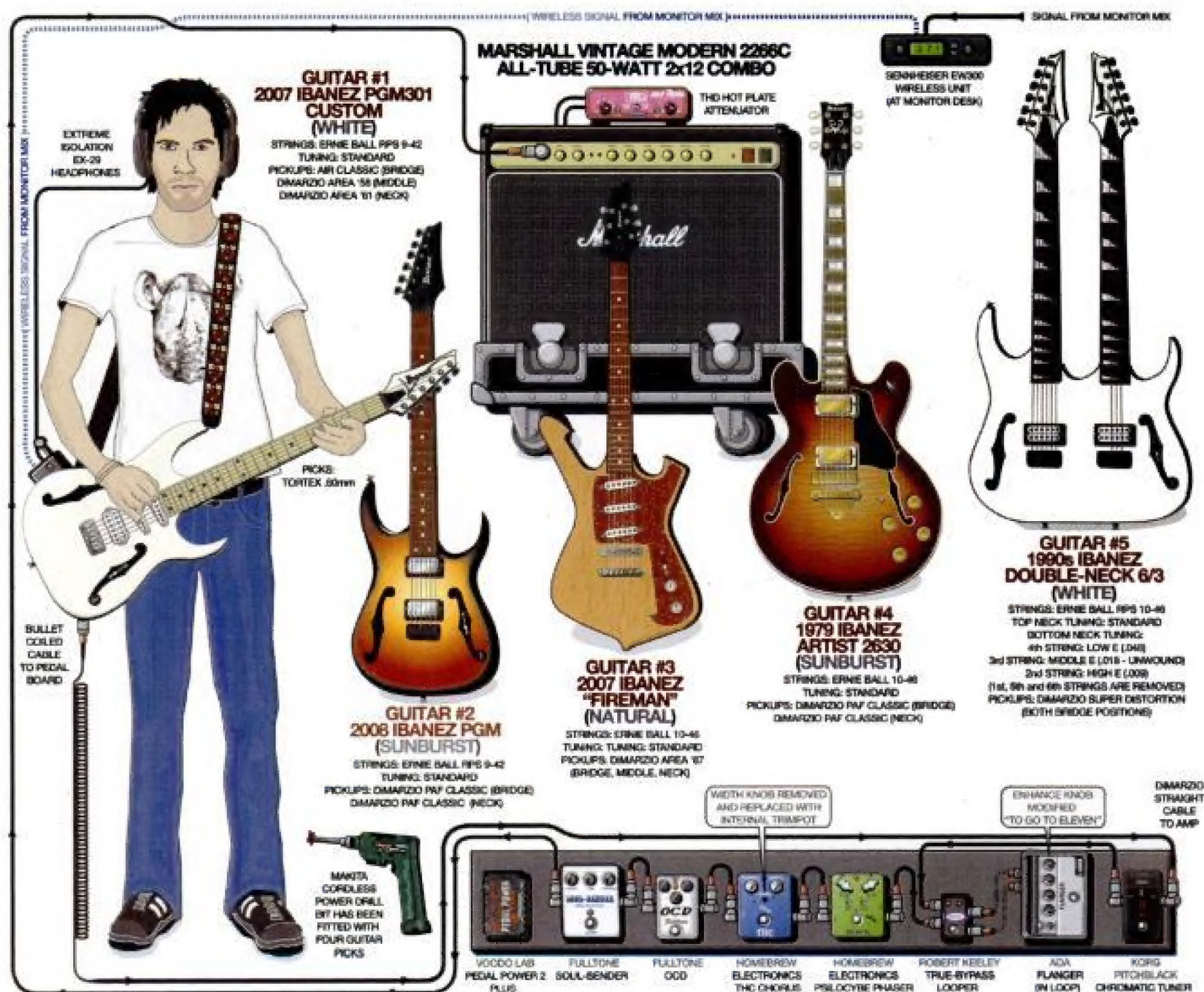
To accommodate Gilbert's size-14 shoes, Homebrew modified his THC chorus pedal. "The width knob has been changed to an internal trimpot so I don't

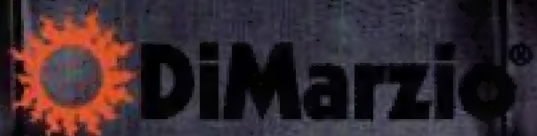
keep stepping on it with my big foot," Gilbert says. "It's pre-set to about 3."

>>FAVORITE PIECE OF GEAR Gilbert gets a lot of his tonal nuances by making good use of his pickup selector switch and that oft-ignored piece of guitar hardware, the volume knob. "I use it all the time," he says. "In fact I think my favorite piece of gear is a volume pot that's easy to turn."

>>SECRET WEAPON "Imagining that my hero, Robin Trower, is in the audience, because hopefully that helps me play fast and hold onto the good, valuable notes. My other secret weapon is ginger tea. It wakes up my brain for another glorious day of rock and roll!" □

I THINK MY FAVORITE PIECE OF GEAR IS A VOLUME POT THAT'S EASY TO TURN.





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